DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 051 SO 008 948

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TITLE Unfair to Young People: How the Public Schools Got the Way They Are.
PUB DATE Jun 75
NOTE 53p.
AVAILABLE FROM Youth Liberation, 2007 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 ($0.65, bulk rate available on request, softbound)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Capitalism; Educational Alternatives; *Educational Change; Educational Development; *Educational History; Educational Philosophy; Educational Practice; Elementary Secondary Education; *Political Influences; Political Socialization; *Socialism; Socioeconomic Influences; United States History

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides an analysis of the American educational system from a socialist perspective. Based on the idea that our past and present educational system has been largely determined by the needs and ideology of the capitalist economic system, the author proposes an alternative society and educational system that places human needs above private profit. The booklet is divided into three sections which analyze the past, present, and alternative future educational systems. The first section examines how the capitalist ideology influenced the development of our educational system through such concepts as tracking, political indoctrination in history courses, and the direct and indirect capitalistic control of school administration. Section two explains the school socialization process under capitalism and how the capitalist system benefits from this process. It focuses on how punctuality and attendance, obedience to authority, competition and individualism, sexism and racism, and acceptance of boredom contribute to the capitalist ideology. Section three outlines the Chinese and Cuban educational systems as examples of socialist countries that have made great strides in the development of their educational systems. (Author/DE)

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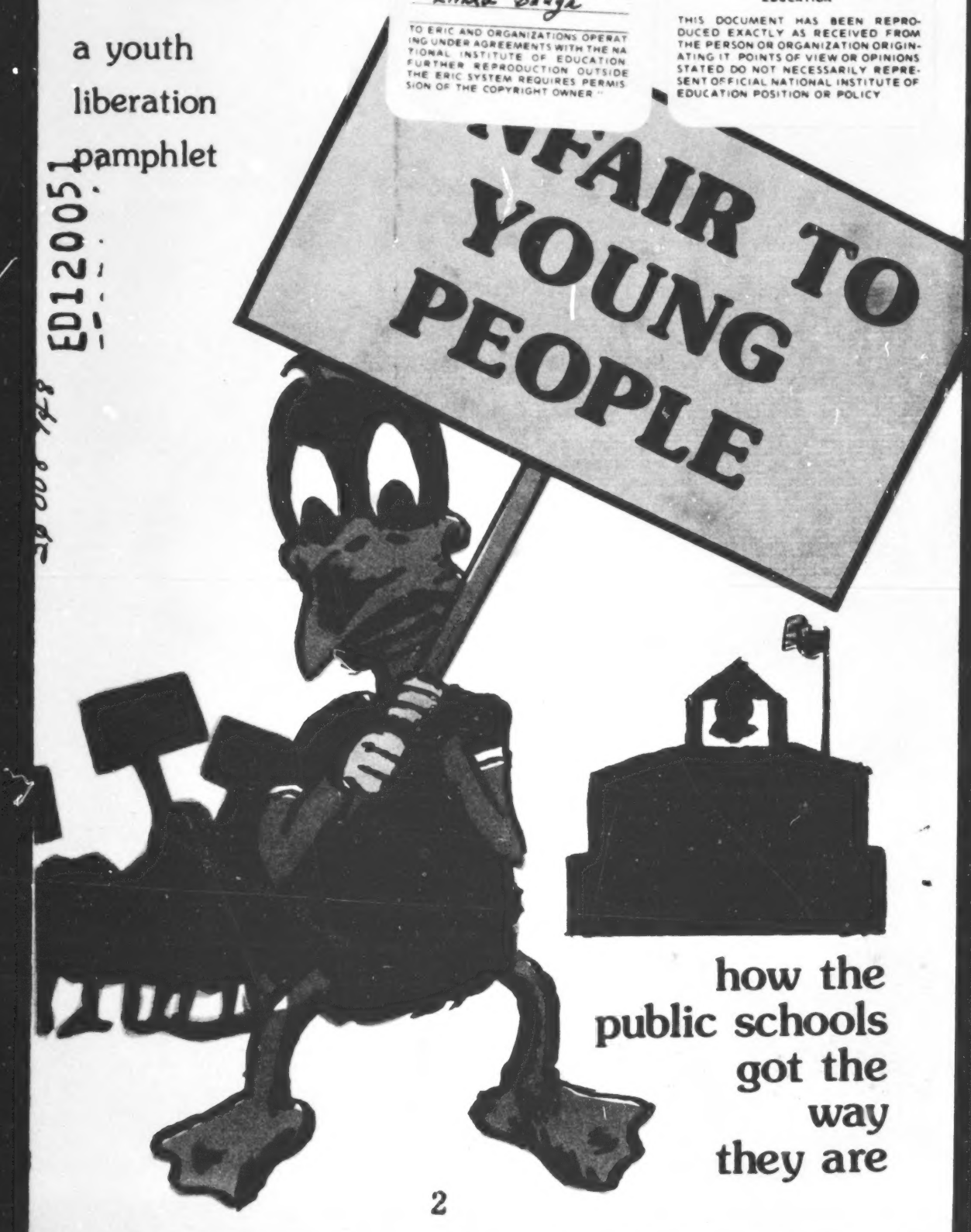

how the public schools got the way they are

published by Youth Liberation Press
in conjunction with the Wisconsin Alliance

First Printing: June 1975

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FEB 04 1976

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INTRODUCTION

Something is wrong with the American school system. Millions of young people drop out of high school and half the students in major cities have serious reading problems. After three months of teachers' strikes in Philadelphia in the 1972-73 school year, students' test scores had gone up instead of down.

School officials bemoan the vandalism in schools but ignore the vandalism done daily to the minds of 40 million young people, who are forced to sit in rows while the schools destroy their creativity and curiosity.

Students' most basic constitutional and human rights are trampled as a matter of course. Some rights, like being able to go to the bathroom when you want to, aren't covered by the Constitution and are denied daily. Other rights, like freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and due process, are guaranteed by the Constitution but are denied anyway. Hundreds of thousands of students are suspended every year, including a high percentage of minority students, for the most ridiculous reasons.

In past years, many school-centered movements have come and gone: militant teachers' strikes, free schools, high school student unions, and the community control movement. These movements made some significant reforms, but the basic nature of the schools remains unchanged.

A major fault of past movements, a fault that still exists, is the failure to understand the real roots of the problem. Only by understanding why the schools are the way they are can we hope to change them. The purpose of this pamphlet is to begin providing such an understanding.

When I was first involved in the high school student movement I thought that the problem was the mean people on the school board and in the principal's office. While I'm fully aware that there are such people, a few encounters with liberal educators made me realize that individual people were't the real cause of our problems. Nobody could be "mean" enough to construct this school system.

I began reading books on education, like *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* and *The Student as Nigger*, and decided the real problem was a faulty educational philosophy. It's true that the school system has its share of bad educational philosophies, but my encounter with teachers trying to put more humane philosophies into effect, and failing at it, made me realize that something even more basic was behind this mess.

Finally, I began to realize what was going on. The Wisconsin Student Union (WSU), which I was a part of, had argued that students should have a bigger say in school affairs because once

we got out of school we would have to know how to run society, and how to make decisions. But our involvement in the anti-war movement showed us that the American people *don't* make the decisions in our society, and in fact the schools *are* training us to act out our adult roles. Suddenly it was clear why schools so often seemed like factories. Our society needs people who will passively accept the government's decisions about national affairs, and passively obey their employer's orders on the job. The schools train people to do that.

Members of the Wisconsin Student Union studied this subject more. By researching school history we discovered some of the real rationales behind schooling. We found that the big-money interests which meddle in so many areas today were pretty active in the past, too. Capitalists shaped the schools in America to train docile workers and taxpayers.

We realized that the problems in the schools didn't stem from bad people, or bad philosophies, but from a bad system: capitalism. Many WSU members decided to work on changing the whole system. Eventually we joined up with the Wisconsin Alliance, a socialist organization that's been around since 1968. Within the Alliance students, teachers and other workers were fighting not only for a more humane and equitable school system, but for a more humane and democratic society.

This pamphlet outlines some of the things I learned from those struggles. Most of my experiences were in Milwaukee and Madison and often I give examples or illustrations from those cities. But the points I make are true all around the U.S., and if you look you'll probably find similar examples wherever you live.

There are a few comments I want to make here. First, after sitting through years of history classes you probably can't think of anything more boring than a pamphlet about the history of education. But history doesn't have to be the kind of stuff you get in school. It can be a means of understanding the past and present, which makes it possible to change the future. That's what I have tried to present here.

Second, parts of this pamphlet may seem repetitious. Many subjects, like tracking and political indoctrination, are discussed in two separate sections: in one section I look at their historical origins, and in the other I examine their role today. While there is occasional overlap, each section contains essentially new ideas.

Finally, I'd be pleased to hear criticisms or questions about the pamphlet. You can write to me at this address.

Bob Peterson

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
May 1, 1975

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: It would be impossible for me to mention everyone who has helped me with this pamphlet. However I would like to thank in particular Jon Schaller and other people from Youth Liberation, without whose help this would never have been written or published. I would also like to thank the people, including many from Wisconsin Youth for Democratic Education and the Wisconsin Alliance, who criticized the first draft and offered suggestions. Finally, I would like to thank the thousands of high school students whose continual struggle for more humane and democratic schools has inspired my research and writing of this pamphlet.

YESTERDAY

In primitive societies the young learned skills informally, through imitation.

EARLY EDUCATION

Although public schools are a modern invention, *education* has always existed. Cavepeople passed knowledge from generation to generation, teaching their children how to hunt and gather and survive.

Formal schooling for a selected few developed only after society became divided into two main classes. On the bottom were the ruled, who produced what was necessary for their own survival plus a surplus. Above them was the small ruling class, which took that surplus but produced nothing. Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome all had such classes. While methods of schooling differed in these societies, the function was the same: to prepare the future rulers and their aides.

Most people, from peasant and slave families, had no formal schooling. Skills were passed on informally and obedience was learned in the family and through organized religion. The Egyptian pharaohs, for example, claimed descendance from the sun god Ra to legitimize their power. Other rulers used similar tactics.

During the Dark Ages (5th to 9th centuries A.D.) and Feudal Ages (9th to 14th centuries) the family, church and formal schooling continued in these roles. The structure of the family changed little. On feudal holdings, the men controlled the women and children, and were themselves controlled by the feudal lords. In the villages, skills and occupations were inherited, passed from parent to child.

The Church continued to support the established order. Unlike the pharaohs, who boasted direct descendance from god, the feudal rulers merely claimed certification: the "divine right of kings." But the effect was the same – to question the rulers was to question god, and few people did so without being imprisoned, branded as heretics, or burned at the stake.

Formal schooling remained a training ground for the ruling classes, now the kings and feudal lords, and their subordinates.

THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

First in England, then throughout Europe, a new class known as the

bourgeoisie challenged the feudal ruling classes.* They were mostly merchants and small workshop owners, who had become a prosperous social class. World trade – particularly slave trade, piracy, and plunder of the new world – helped this new class to rapidly increase its wealth.

The old feudal schools weren't open to these rising capitalists. So they set up their own. Naturally, these new schools came into conflict with the old religious schools of the feudal rulers; in many areas, the local priest and the school master became archenemies.

Two important institutions in society were being weakened at this time. The Catholic Church, with its emphasis on the hereafter, was losing influence to the new Protestant denominations which emphasized rewards in this world for hard work. The family was also losing much of its influence. Peasants were forced from their lands by great land barons, and began moving to the cities to do factory work. The nuclear family was losing its importance as a productive unit.

Thus the old stabilizing influences of the church and family were declining, while rising industrialization created a new, unstable situation. Workers, thrown together in oppressive factories and mines, were able to form unions and revolutionary parties that fought for their interests.

* I have tried to keep this pamphlet from sounding rhetorical, but I believe it is important not to use euphemisms for terms like *ruling class* and *capitalist class*. For a discussion of any terms that are unclear, please refer to the appendix.

Enclosures were one of the forces driving people off the land – wealthy farmers converted their land to pasture, and forced their tenant farmers to leave for the towns.

These conditions created a serious crisis. The working class was demanding its rights and threatening the power of the growing capitalist class. One response to that threat, in virtually all capitalist countries (Britain, Prussia, France, and the U.S.) was a system of mass education.

So we can see that the rise of public education wasn't unique to the U.S. and didn't just come at any historical time. Rather it was a direct result of conditions created by the rise of capitalism. Now let's look more closely at the forces that started and shaped public schooling in the United States.

FIRST SCHOOLING IN AMERICA

Until the time when the native peoples of this country discovered Christopher Columbus, wandering around looking for China, education simply meant passing skills from parents to children. But with the Europeans came missionaries. Their missionary schools taught Indians to love the invaders who were driving them off the land.

North Versus South

As the Native Americans were pushed back, two types of economic systems developed in the colonies.

The South, after the 17th century, became dominated by large tobacco and cotton plantations. While exporting these products, rich Southerners imported manufactured goods and African slaves – whose sweat and blood created much of the original wealth of this nation.

In the North, and later in the West, small landowners raised food and artisans produced items for local consumption. This was called *petty commodity production,* which means the people individually owned their tools and land, and directed their own work. Also based in the North were the wealthy merchant capitalists, who handled trade between the colonies and the Old World.

Methods of schooling differed between these areas. In the South, slaves were prohibited by law from attending school. Children of the ruling class went to private schools, or had tutors.

In the North, three types of schools developed. First, some towns set up their own "community schools", which for a few months of the year taught

reading, writing and religion. Second, there were private schools for children of the rich. Finally, some schools were organized by church groups to "civilize" paupers. None of these types of schools were widespread, though, and most people didn't attend any of them.[1]

The development of these early schools was greatly affected by the struggles within society at large. Until the Civil War, the farmers and independent craftspeople in the North frequently clashed with the wealthy, growing manufacturing class. The struggle over ratification of the Constitution, Shays Rebellion in 1786 and the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 were all attempts by small producers to gain control over the society which was being run more and more by the propertied classes.

There was also a mass movement of people away from the country and into the cities. Independent grain and dairy farmers fought a losing battle with the merchants, banks and railroad companies that were trying to squeeze as much profit as possible from the farmers. Great parcels of land were granted to railway companies by the federal government, especially from 1856 to 1864. Large numbers of farmers were driven off their land by these forces.

In urban areas, artisans and small traders were slowly forced out of business by larger workshops, which employed the latest machinery.

The Effects of Urbanization

The result of all this was that many farmers and bankrupted artisans were thrown into city streets. They were joined by large numbers of immigrants, particularly after 1848.

These changes had direct consequences for the family. On small farms the family had served as the main "unit of production." That is, most foods and "manufactured" goods were produced either on a family farm or in a family workshop. Children were socialized by the family, and learned production skills through it. City life changed all that. The family was broken up, with different members working in different places, and it could no longer socialize young people by itself. The oppression of women was intensified, as many of them had to work both at the factory and at home. The family house, particularly for the working class, became more of a shelter and restaurant than anything else.

There was another problem. Farmers and artisans, once their own bosses, now had factory supervisors telling them when to start work, and how long and hard they should work – which could be as much as 16 hours a day. Just as in Europe, workers formed organizations that represented and fought for their interests. In New England, the first area of the country to industrialize, workers' movements and unions formed in the 1830s and '40s, resulting in labor riots and strikes.

Early Support for Schooling

What does all this have to do with schools? All these factors – the declining role of the family, the new work relations, the urban strife, the political struggles, the waves of immigrants – created a highly volatile political situation. The difficulties the new members of the working class had in adapting to the strict discipline of factory life, plus the rising class consciousness among the whole working class, threatened the system. Nervous capitalists debated about how to respond.

First they organized municipal police forces and militias, and passed alien and sedition laws, but they knew violent repression would be shortsighted. The

eventual answer, just as in Europe, was mass education.

The manufacturers began listening to educational reformers like Horace Mann, who argued that schooling would not only reduce poverty and crime, but would also make better workers. He suggested that the social relations (the hierarchal structure) of the school should reflect those of the factory. That way, the very process of education would teach people such needed traits as punctuality, dependability, obedience and willingness to work for external rewards.

Other educators made similar claims for what schools could do. The 1846 report of the Lowell, Massachusetts, school committee stated that education was "the surest safety against internal commotions."

Many manufacturers agreed. In 1841, one Lowell manufacturer wrote:

I have never considered mere knowledge. . . as the only advantage derived from a good Common School education. In times of agitation I have always looked to the most intelligent, best educated and the most moral for support. The ignorant and uneducated I have generally found the most turbulent and troublesome.[2]

A leading educator wrote:

One great benefit of going to school is that it establishes a habit of regularity and persistency in effort. Indeed, the boy who leaves school and goes to work does not necessarily learn to work steadily, but quite often the reverse.[3]

Even school recess had its value in controlling the working class. C. P. Carey, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Schools, encouraged playgrounds with the words "A boy cannot play games without learning subordination and respect for law and order."

Azel Ladd, Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction, spoke of the need for internal organization within the school in 1853:

System is an essential feature in the proper conduct of every school.... Each scholar [should] be able to know the exact time when his lesson will be required, and that no trifling reason will excuse a want of preparation. It will render the school more profitable, will provide for the performance of a greater amount of labor, and will inculcate the form habits of order in business, of promptness, of duty, and of system of things.

Many times the propertied classes began supporting public education as soon as workers won the right to vote. It was no coincidence that shortly after the Doors rebellion was put down in Rhode Island, and the ruling classes gave in to demands for universal suffrage, a system of compulsory education was established.

While Horace Mann and other reformers were hobnobbing with the manufacturers, the working class was putting forth its own vision of what education should be. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, Independent Workingman's (sic) Parties were organized in 61 cities and towns. They demanded public education for everyone as "a matter of right and duty."

These workers opposed the monopoly of knowledge held by the capitalists. They wanted schools that would be "under control and suffrage of the people," not of professional bureaucrats.

Workers' Resistance

Thus there were two general views of what schools could be: one held by the reformers, who were supported by manufacturers and merchants, and another held by workers. Not surprisingly, it was the reformers who dominated.

The reformers didn't set up a new school system. As we've previously

mentioned, there were some schools already in existence. The reformers centralized them, lengthened the school year, and then expanded the whole system geographically so it affected more young people.

How did the workers and common people react? It's hard to give a good general answer. In many areas they resisted these schools, which they viewed as largely serving rich kids. In mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts, even though the high schools were financed by everyone through a property tax, only 15% of the high school aged population was in school. In Norwich, Connecticut, as in some other areas, the working class voted in 1856 to abolish their high school – in violation of state law.[4]

When schooling first became compulsory, widespread truancy was one common response.

Widespread truancy was another result of this working-class dissatisfaction. Unlike today, working class parents frequently supported their children's desire to stay away from school. Compulsory education laws were passed (the first one was in Massachusetts in 1851, and nearly every state had such a law by 1918) but for decades they went unenforced. Wisconsin passed its law in 1879 yet nine years later less than 60% of school-aged children were in school, and many of them only sporadically. But gradually, as the school system expanded, working-class resistance to it greatly declined.

There were several reasons for this decline, and they varied over time. Workers understood that the cause of trade unionism and revolutionary working peoples' parties would be enhanced if the membership could read and write. Some workers saw compulsory education as a way to prevent child labor, which was not only killing their children but also taking adults' jobs. Through the educators' propaganda, working people also began to believe that their children could become socially mobile by getting a good education.

CHANGE AND EXPANSION

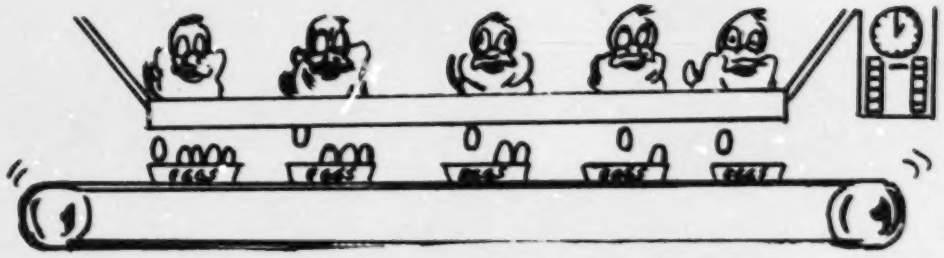
The first system of public education, reared by Mann and his backers in the mid-1800s, adequately served the needs of the capitalist class for over a generation. But towards the end of that century, the needs of the economic system began changing more rapidly, and the school system did not keep pace. Let's look briefly at those changes and their effect on the schools.

Concentration of Wealth

The Civil War was in many ways a turning point for northern industrialists. The slave system had interfered with many of the things they wanted: tariffs to ward off European competition, a larger market for their commodities (free laborers consumed four times as much as slaves) and a larger labor force. After the Civil War, with slavery gone, the capitalists got their way on these things and were able to rapidly expand.

The huge profits made during the war, the tariff of 1862, the huge land-give-aways, the extension of the railroads, and increasingly productive equipment, all made it possible for the merchants and manufacturers of the Northeast to accumulate large amounts of capital. By investing that capital, they gained monopoly control over certain important sectors of the economy, especially transportation.

Meanwhile factories were getting larger, and being concentrated into fewer hands. Their owners organized production in the way that served them best: a *highly specialized division of labor* (i.e. each worker performed a specific task again and again during the workday) and a *hierarchal system of management* (a line of command from the owner at the top, to a few levels of intermediary supervisors, and the majority of workers at the bottom.)



For many, industrialization meant that products which were once made at home were now made on an assembly line. The boring nature of these jobs often led to labor militancy.

The new system not only increased profits, the primary goal of capitalist production, it also enabled the management to control the workers more easily.

These developments substantially altered the class structure of America. Those on top, a small group of financiers and industrialists, concentrated more and more wealth and corporations under their control.

A report of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations said in 1902 that 2% of the population had accumulated 35% of the nation's wealth, while the poorest 65% of the people got by with 5% of the wealth. Thus, by the turn of the century, a national ruling class with tremendous economic and political power had emerged.

The working class, on the other hand, was growing in numbers and diversity. Millions of people streamed into the cities. While only 15% of the population lived in urban areas in 1850, over 40% did by 1900. Yet once in the city, workers found themselves impoverished, degraded by long hours, low wages, and no control over their work.

They responded by becoming more militant. The union movement grew rapidly in the 1870s and '80s, and the socialist movement blossomed at the turn of the century. Class struggle, around issues like the 8-hour day and prohibition of child labor, raged everywhere. Struggles led by organizations such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the American Railway Union openly challenged the capitalist order. The national guard had to be created to put down workers' rebellions.

Extension of Schools

Apparently the public schools, which had been intended to prevent such disturbances, were failing. Some capitalists opposed any extension of the school system because they thought either that the working class was becoming too educated, or that schools would interfere with their profitable exploitation of child labor. But a new generation of educational reformers argued that the schools should be expanded and increased in efficiency. They claimed that the diverse needs of the large corporations would be best served by schools which could efficiently sort and train the young.

Beginning shortly before the turn of the century and continuing into the "Progressive Era" (1900 to 1916), urban reformers and far-sighted capitalists worked to create a universal, compulsory, tax-supported school system, controlled not by city political machines or by democratic groups of workers, but by centralized bureaucracies accessible only to the rich and their underlings.

The reformers also pushed for greater efficiency in the schools, and tried to imitate mass-production techniques developed in the factories. They froze teachers' wages, increased class sizes and lengthened the working day, and saved money by hiring more more women teachers (whom they could pay less) than men. Students were sorted by achievement tests. The schools were looking

more like factories, with students as raw material, teachers as the workers, and school superintendents as the plant managers.

The epitome of this system was the platoon system, invented in the industrial center of Gary, Indiana. By achieving assembly-line standards, the "platoon" of students moved by bell from room to room, enabling teachers to see as many as 400 a day. This, to the reformers, was pure bliss. By 1929 more than a thousand schools operated on the Gary plan. Some cities, like New York, avoided it only through determined teacher resistance.

TRACKING

The most important change made in the educational system in the early 20th century was the institution of tracking. High schools had previously offered only college prep courses and business classes. That was fine, as long as they had almost exclusively middle- and upper-class students. But by the end of the 1800s leading educators and capitalists were using truancy laws and other pressures to force children from *all* classes to attend schools. Statistics show the result: In 1890 only 7% of the 14- to 17-year-olds in the country attended secondary schools. By 1910 the figure was 16%, by 1920, 33%, and by 1930, 51%.

A large percentage of these new students were immigrants, whom educators especially wanted to get into school in order to "Americanize" them. In 1890 barely any immigrants went to secondary schools, but by 1909 40% of the high school students in most cities were immigrants.

To give management and college-prep courses to all these students would only raise hopes that could never be met; yet *some* students still needed to get those courses. Educators felt that the high school curriculum needed to be "differentiated" in order to deal with the different types of workers it had to produce. One of them described the proposed changes in this way:

> *We can picture the educational system as having a very important function as a selection agency, a means of selecting the men of best intelligence from the deficient and mediocre. All are poured into the system at the bottom; the incapable are soon rejected or drop out after repeating various grades and pass into the ranks of unskilled labor. . . . the more intelligent who are to be clerical workers pass into the high school; and the most intelligent enter the universities where they are selected for the professions.*[5]

Woodrow Wilson, who later made the world safe for democracy while smashing the free press and labor unions at home, was more blunt in 1909:

> *We want one class of people to have a liberal education, and we want one class of persons, a very much larger class of persons, of necessity, to forego the privileges of a liberal education and fit into specific manual tasks.*

Methods of Differentiation

American schools met this need for a tracking or sorting mechanism very efficiently. They did it in several ways.

First, wealthy parents sent their children to private schools, a practice that continues today.

Second, school officials drew school boundaries in such a way that working-class, poor, and minority children attended different public schools than their upper- and middle-class counterparts.

Third, children from richer families went to school for more years, and were far more likely to attend college – a long-established means of tracking or sorting.

But the fact remained that many children from middle-class families did attend the same schools as working-class children – and the middle-class parents often didn't like it. They worried about the influence the "uncultured" students might have on their own offspring. Moreover, they wanted a reliable way to pass on their status to their children, something that would be harder to do if kids from all social classes received the same education. The result was that a new definition of equal opportunity developed. It was summed up by the Boston school superintendent in 1908:

Until very recently [the schools] have offered equal opportunity for all to receive one kind of education, but what will make them democratic is to provide opportunity for all to receive such education as will fit them equally well for their particular life work.

To fit students "equally well for their particular life work," vocational tracks were developed for children from working-class families, domestic and clerical courses for women, and academic tracks were reserved for those who would later use book learning in college or at a white-collar job.

The Sorting Process

A means was still needed to separate young people into these different tracks. To blatantly divide them according to social class would have seemed undemocratic. Instead, mechanisms were developed which allowed students to be divided along those general lines, yet which did not seem racist or class-biased.

The most important of these were IQ and other standardized tests. These tests, developed by the army in World War I, provided a supposedly objective way to classify students – those who scored well were said to be "intelligent" and were more likely to get into tracks that led to high-ranking jobs. Those students who weren't able to get into the upper tracks were taught that they had only themselves (and their "lack of intelligence") to blame – that their track had nothing to do with race, sex or economic class.

(In reality it is now recognized that such tests were and are biased in favor of white middle-class students. See *FPS* no. 43.)

At the same time, there was a complementary growth of guidance counseling. Counselors used test scores to guide students into tracks, but made it look like the whole thing was voluntary. Actually, students' desires then, as now, had little to do with what track they were in. If you don't believe that, try to get into a different one.

A third development at this time was the junior high school. There students would "choose" (with help from their counselor and test scores) what vocation to go into. The junior high was also used as a vocational training school, after which poor and working-class kids got jobs, while richer students continued on to high school.

Extra-curricular activities filled another important need of the tracking system. Because of the need for a diversified labor force, specialization of study had been created in the schools. However, students still needed to learn loyalty toward the school (and later the company) as a whole. When students were separated into specialized fields of study, that didn't occur. Companies tried to build team spirit with company sports teams, news publications, and picnics. School officials, for their part, instituted extra-curricular activities such as assemblies (school spirit!!!), student government, school sports, school newspapers, and student clubs, each promoting the concept of working for the good of the institution (now the school, later the company).

The second function of extra-curricular activities was their role in teaching "leadership skills within limits" to students from the upper tracks. Children of

Sure student councils are a farce. They were never intended to give students any power – only to teach the desired social traits.

working people usually had jobs after school, and were not as likely to be encouraged by their teachers or parents to participate in these activities. Consequently, it was mostly children of the upper- and middle-classes that learned leadership skills from these activities. (It is noteworthy that Wilson Gill, the person who pushed for the creation of student governments the hardest, also helped found the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution – then a racist, anti-immigrant group – and now a right wing organization.[6])

Mobility

Tracking, then, appeared in many forms. The important thing is that its class bias was always disguised under some veil of objectivity. Education was presented as a cure for inequality and oppression: if people are poor, give them a dose of education and everything will be OK. Needless to say, this was hogwash. Sure, there was individual mobility for a few, but never for the many. Most people then, as today, stayed in the same social class as their parents, even though they may have gotten more years of schooling.

An important sidelight to the issue of mobility was that the few individuals who did move up the social pyramid through education were often those who could have been the brightest, most articulate leaders of the poor. In this way the leadership of the poor, minority and working class movements was coopted.

By the the time of Great Depression, the tracking system was well on the road to becoming the major way students were sorted, trained and pigeon-holed into the corporate economy.

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

The educational reformers were concerned with the *content* as well as the form of schooling that the common people received.* The curriculum that they developed reinforced the ideology that was already being promoted by the structure of the schools.

* Although I use the past tense here, much of what I say is still true today.

This type of indoctrination developed with the rest of the educational system. An American economist, writing prior to the spread of mass education, said in 1828:

> *Education universally extended throughout the community will tend to disabuse the working class. . . (of the notion). . . that manual labor is at present very inadequately rewarded, owing to combination of the rich against the poor; that mere mental labor is comparatively worthless. . . . The mistaken and ignorant people who entertain these fallacies as truths will learn, when they have the opportunity of learning, that the institution of political society originated in the protection of property.*[7]

"Americanization" of immigrants was a major task of the schools. Loren S. Minckley, Superintendent of Schools in Frontenac, Kansas (a mining town with 90% immigrants), organized the school system around citizen training. He hoped to create a type of education "that is going to save America and

American institutions, and make it the ruling nation of the earth." Minckley explained his ideas in his 1917 book *Americanization Through Education:*

How is the foreigner to be trained for citizenship? . . . How are they to live in it [America] when it is strikes and contention most of the time, and they are out of employment one-third of the time and the other two-thirds receive a wage barely sufficient to keep the wolf from the door? . . . Many of them never attend church, so it is not there that they learn patriotism. Where then are these foreign people to learn to love this great land of ours? . . .

Shall we say the teachers must make good patriotic citizens, citizens who will swear allegiance to the United States and especially against the land where their father and mother lived and died?

The answer was a resounding yes.

In some places there were direct relationships between working-class struggles and the nature of the curriculum. In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the scene of the internationally famous "Bread and Roses" strike by women textile workers in 1912, the textile owners were worried about a possible working-class revolution. They implemented a new school program, called "the Lawrence Plan for Education in Citizenship," to warn 6- to 13-year-olds of such "dangers threatening democracy" (and their profits) as "the menace of Bolshevism in Lawrence."

Upton Sinclair writes in *The Goslings* of many instances where radical or even liberal teachers were fired by school boards for supposedly being Bolsheviks. Many times it was just because they were involved in union activities.

Distortion of History

Unfortunately there were many other, less obvious, forms of indoctrination. The whole method of thought and approach to history subtly trained people to accept the present and misunderstand the past.

Students were taught that ideas alone, and not the conflict of different social classes, were the main force of history. For example, schools taught that the Protestant Reformation was caused more by conflicting ideas about holy communion than by the rise of the capitalist class; that the Civil War was fought more because of Abraham Lincoln's high moral standards than because of the economic interests of the northern capitalists; that Andrew Carnegie got rich more because he was bright and hard-working than because he exploited so many people.

All historical events were portrayed as the result of "universal ideas" that marched down from the skies into human affairs and mysteriously moved famous men to speech-making and vast nations into war.

History was presented not as the history of ordinary people, but rather as the history of individuals: presidents and senators, Rockefellers and Mellons. According to textbooks, it was not working people who built the factories, farms and railways, it was a few rich, powerful men. In a people's history play called *The People are a River*, the Alive and Trucking Theater depicts schooling at that time in Minnesota:

Teacher: Good morning children.

Children: Good morning, Miss Hesson.

Teacher: Is everyone ready to start today's lesson? Now for the quiz. Who discovered America? You.

Wendy: Christopher Columbus.

Teacher: Very good. Now, who is the father of our country? You.

The railroad strike of 1877, says one high school text, taught labor unions that "such violence hurt their cause." It sure did – they got shot, as this picture shows. But the text doesn't discuss the real nature of the antagonism between the workers and the ruling class.

John: My very own father.
Teacher: No, No, NO!! You.
Wendy: George Washington.
Teacher: Very good. Now, who built the railroad? You.
Wendy: My uncle worked on the railroad for fifteen years.
Teacher: No, No, NO!! Now repeat after me. James Jerome Hill built the railroad.
Children: James Jerome Hill built the railroad.
Teacher: Father Hennepin brought religion to the Indians.
Children: Father Hennepin brought religion to the Indians.
Teacher: And General Sibley saved us from the Sioux.
Children: General Sibley saved us from the Sioux.
Teacher: Very good. Class dismissed.[8]

This approach to history didn't come about by accident. A main conflict in our society has been between the mass of people who produce all the wealth, and the few people who because they own the factories and railroads rake in money without producing anything. If everyone understood that it was the working people who built this country, they might get the idea that it is the working people who should run it.

Educators found that a good way to keep that from happening, and to indoctrinate immigrants, was to promote hero-worship. Heroes of the ruling classes were emphasized: James Madison wrote the Constitution, Andrew Carnegie built the steel mills, Samuel Gompers created the American labor

movement; and John D. Rockefeller built the oil industry. Their exploits were glorified, while the struggles of the working class and common people were distorted or left out.

Instead of showing how ideas were the product of social classes fighting each other for economic and political power, this way of looking at history made people feel powerless. It portrayed human progress as the result of "great leaders" convincing the rest of society to behave in a way that promoted the unfolding of an "abstract and unchanging" human nature, rather than the struggles of common people for a better life.

1930s TO 1960s

From the depression until the mid-1950s, little educational reform took place. The biggest change was that schooling kept expanding – in 1940 73% of high-school-aged youth were in school by 1960 it was 90%.

Control of the schools became more centralized. The 130,000 school districts of 1930 were consolidated, by 1960, into 20,000 much larger districts.

The working class struggles of the 1930s -- the Unemployed Councils, the formation and expansion of the CIO, the fights against housing evictions – seem to have had little effect on the schools. Some radicals were elected to school boards, and Communist Party members achieved leadership in the New York local of the American Federation of Teachers, but the schools at this time played a role secondary to the larger struggles taking place in the streets and factories.

After World War II, 12 million soldiers returned, and Southern blacks and Appalachian whites began moving to the cities. Unemployment threatened to soar, and the schools looked like mass detention homes.

McCarthyism dominated the '50s. Anything progressive was attacked as Communist, and the New York city schools were purged of radicals. Anti-communism filled the history and civics texts.

In New York, and many other cities, teachers who showed any sign of being radical or even progressive were often shipped out of town.

Post-war Period

U.S. corporations were concerned about communism abroad as well as at home. With the capitalist world in shambles after World War II and China going socialist, the U.S. corporations, with economic interests throughout the world, worried that a people's revolution would close off more markets and raw materials to them.

Certain steps were taken to prevent that. U.S. foreign aid, especially the Marshall Plan, was used to bolster friendly regimes. When monetary aid proved insufficient, the CIA or Marines were sent in, as with Lebanon in 1958, Cuba in 1961, the Dominican Republic in 1965, and numerous other places.

Within the U.S., the corporations shaped the curriculum to meet their changing technological needs. When the Russians launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite in space, business used it to stir up support for rapidly expanding science education.

The late '50s brought another social movement, small at first, but later to drastically affect the school system. The civil rights movement, which started in the South, was to challenge the inequalities and racism in all parts of society, but particularly in the schools, as we will discuss later.

WHO CONTROLS THE SCHOOLS?

Up to this point we have seen how schools have been expanded and

"reformed," to meet the needs of the capitalist economic system and its political apparatus. I have implied that the school system is controlled by educational reformers and their corporate backers. In fact, uncovering who controls the schools and how they do so is not an easy task.

Unlike we have been led to believe, the masses of common people do not run the schools in our "democratic" society. Nor is it a small group of mean capitalists who meet on Wall Street every third Tuesday to plan out school curriculum and policy.

My research has convinced me, however, that the schools *are* run in the interests of the capitalist system and the ruling class. This done through *direct* ruling class control of foundations and certain parts of "school government," and through *indirect* control via the pervasiveness of capitalist ideology in our society. Ordinary people influence the schools only when they are highly organized, as in militant teachers unions.

Direct Control

Historically the state governments have been the most important means by which the rich control the schools. State legislatures passed the compulsory attendance laws, granted authority for taxation, created local and state school boards, and forced towns of certain sizes to maintain high schools. Yet these legislatures had few working people on them and were heavily influenced by pro-business lobbying. To seriously run for state office takes thousands of dollars, and except in cases of strong people's movements, only the rich, and those with support from the rich, are able to run.

One example of the power that business interests wielded was described by Upton Sinclair in *The Goslings*. Representatives of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) came to Wisconsin in 1921 and asked the State Superintendent of Schools, Charles Cary, to institute industrial education in the schools. Cary refused – such a program would have destroyed the union apprenticeship programs, and thus weakened the unions. NAM threatened to "put him out," but Cary still didn't move. NAM then lobbied in the state legislature and got a separate vocational-education system set up in Wisconsin. NAM kept its promise to Cary – in the next election it ran an agent from the Ginn textbook company against him. Wisconsin manufacturers backed NAM's candidate, and Cary was defeated.

After the legislature, the next level of control of in the school system is the local school board – a body with much local autonomy. Like the state legislatures, local school boards are controlled by the richer members of the community. One way they got this control was by reducing the size of school boards. In the 19th century, many boards had large numbers of members, each one representing a small section of the city. Working class and minority voters were able to elect people from their neighborhood who would represent them. As boards became smaller, each member represented a larger area (and in some cases members were elected at-large), and it was harder for people to be fairly represented. Boston, one of the first industrial cities in the U.S., had a school board with 97 members in 1850, 24 members in 1876, and 5 members in 1908.

The citizens who pushed for these reforms and who benefited from them were the social and power elite of the large cities. One study of the occupations of St. Louis school board members before and after the centralization reforms of 1897 (which cut the 21-member board elected by wards to a 12-member board elected at-large) showed that the percentage of professionals on the board jumped from 4.8% to 58.3% and representatives of big business from 9.5% to

25%. Small businesspeople dropped from 47.6% to 16.7%, and wage-earning employees dropped from 28.6% to none.*

In communities of even moderate size, a person must be well known and have quite a bit of money and extra time to win a school board election -- plus be wealthy enough to afford to fill such a non-paying position. Minorities, women, workers, and poor people thus face discrimination.

Several studies have documented this bias. Scott Nearing, in 1916, surveyed 104 major cities and found that three-fourths of all school board members were business or professional people, yet people from those professions represented less than 15% of the population. Another survey, taken in 1926 by George Counts, substantiated Nearing's finding.

More recently, a study of all school board members in the country by the Massachusetts Teachers' Association found that only 20% were women, and only 4% black and 2% Chicano. They had an average income of $22,686, and generally ranged in age from 40 to 50. In 1968 the National School Board Association found that of school board members in the 30 largest cities, 62% were either businesspeople (32%), attorneys (20%) or physicians and dentists (10%).

(A pamphlet named *How to Research the Power Structure of Your High School* is available from Youth Liberation -- see bibliography.)

* For further information on the effect of the "progressive" reforms on working class control of the schools see: "City Schools: Centralization of Control at the Turn of the Century" by David B. Tyack, in *Building the Organizational Society*, edited by Jerry Israel, New York: Free Press (MacMillan Co.), 1972.

Under the authority of the school boards come the individual school administrators and bureaucracies. At times it seems as if these school bureaucracies control things more than the actual board does, but they don't. For one thing, the ideas and methods of these lower-level bureaucrats have been shaped by colleges, publications, and past historical practice, all of which have been greatly influenced by the wealthy. Furthermore, even though the bureaucrats have leeway on many issues, they generally operate within specified limits, which they cannot overstep without being corrected by the board.

Directly or indirectly, then, the rich have control over all levels of school administration.

Other Big-Money Influences

Corporations have their fingers in school affairs in other ways. They control the production and distribution of all kinds of educational materials -- films, textbooks, even *My Weekly Reader*. Naturally they don't publish materials which convey ideologies or interpretations of history that are counter to their own interests.

In the field of higher education, foundations have played a major role in determining what is taught. In 1902 John D. Rockefeller established a private multi-million dollar foundation, the General Education Board, and three years later Andrew Carnegie set up his own Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. These foundations didn't tell professors and schools what to do, but by offering badly needed money only to schools with acceptable programs, they exercised great influence. Between 1902 and 1938 the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations provided *two-thirds* of the total endowment received by all higher education institutions, and one-fifth of their operating expenses.

Indirectly, these foundations also influenced secondary education, because colleges had to have strict entrance requirements to get grants, and that meant changes in high school curricula.[9]

Today most innovations in education are started by universities with foundation and corporate grants. For example, corporations first introduced the concept of programmed learning. They paid certain school districts to experiment with it, and once it was proven "successful" the federal government

aided schools that used the program. In this way, many schools voluntarily adopted such programs in order to get money.

Control of Ideology

Corporate control of legislatures, school boards, foundations and learning materials is fairly clear. The subtle intrusion of capitalist ideology into our lives is harder to detect, but every bit as important.

Through the schools, the church, electronic media, newspapers, and just the way power and production are organized, we all learn to look at the world from a capitalist perspective. It shapes our morals, our thoughts, even our feelings. We are taught to be "realistic" and our thoughts on possible alternatives to this social system are buried in a mire of "practical" and short-term solutions.

Thus to control educational institutions, the ruling capitalist class doesn't always have to be directly represented on the school boards and legislatures. It doesn't have to wage big campaigns against textbook authors who want to write from a socialist perspective. The people working for the industries, and those who are elected, generally agree with the capitalist system, and only differ on how to patch up its obvious weaknesses.

Family Influence

All these controls are the primary means by which the rich control the school system. But there is one additional, more subtle method of control.

Educational historian Sam Bowles has described a "class sub-culture" which indirectly plays an important part in perpetuating the class nature of the school system, and of the whole society. While people's ideas are shaped primarily by corporate-dominated schools, mass media, and other institutions, their ideas are also affected by where they work, how people relate to each other at work, and their family and class backgrounds. The attitudes and personality traits that each person learns at work are expressed at home, and are transmitted to cos children.*

Thus the professional person or small shopowner, who has a lot of control over cos work, is likely to be a less authoritarian parent than a secretary or factory worker who is continually ordered around by a boss. Accordingly, their children will learn to behave differently. The differences will also be reflected in what parents expect their children's schools to be like, and how they use the little influence they have in school board elections.*

Furthermore, professional and managerial parents expect their kids to "achieve" in school. Reading is stressed, and magazines and newspapers lay all over the living room. The self-images and self-expectations of the children are similar to those of their parents.

Children from poor and working class families, on the other hand, develop "lower" occupational and educational expectations for themselves.

These differing self-images are reinforced by the differences in the schools, and the way teachers and administrators relate to the different students.

So, our look at control of schooling has shown us that the capitalist class has dominated this institution, and maintains both direct and indirect control over the schools. Moreover, other factors like "class sub-culture" and the very nature of the school itself tend to reinforce the class nature of the schools.

* In this pamphlet I have chosen to use the term *co* to replace the clumsier she/he or her/him, and *cos* to replace hers/his.

* The difference between the liberal, usually suburban school, and the authoritarian, usually urban school is compounded by the fact that less authoritarian teaching environments take more money (for more teachers, equipment, etc.) – money most available in the wealthier districts.

Young people will be socialized in any society. No education can be neutral. The important questions are: Why are we socialized in a specific way? How are we socialized? What effect does it have on us as people and our society as a whole? And furthermore, what else does the school system do?

I've already discussed the first question: we are socialized in a specific way so that we will neatly fit into society. Now we'll look at *how* that socialization process works, and then go on to examine other ways the schools serve the capitalist system.

SOCIALIZATION UNDER CAPITALISM

Students are conditioned to adapt to the hierarchical, alienating nature of work and life in our society. We've already seen how the schools do this by reproducing the social relations of the workplace. In addition, the schools teach certain traits and values, nine of which are described here.

Punctuality and Attendance

As previously explained, a main task of schooling at the turn of the century was to teach immigrant children to come to work every day on time. The new factory workers had been accustomed to deciding things for themselves, and that habit had to be broken. Today, people still don't like having bells tell them when they should be where. So, the schools go out of their way to reward perfect attendance, while punishing truancy.

This isn't to imply that the qualities of being on time and being dependable are bad. Normally, they aren't. But they are when someone else determines the details. Are the jobs people are going to get so alienating that the only way they can be made to be punctual is through dog-like conditioning? If so, is it the people that should be changed, or the jobs?

Learning You Have No Control

Workers in our society don't have much control over what they do. Neither do students. Schools, like offices and factories, are run by the people on top. Students might as well be in prison, considering their hall guards, locked doors,

There's nothing more humiliating than having to ask permission to lay an egg. Ask any duck.

hall passes, denial of consitiutional rights, and total lack of student power.

Students learn that they are powerless, helpless to run their own lives. And in fact they are. They learn that they can't change things – and in fact it *is* damn hard to change things.

Students are kept from making many decisions about their own lives, making them feel all the less capable of affecting reality. By not being able to decide when to go to the bathroom, or what to study, students learn to expect to have someone else making decisions for them. When students *are* allowed to decide things – what elective courses to take, what book to report on – it is only within certain limits, limits determined by someone else.

The amount of responsibility and initiative allowed varies between different students and tracks. Schools generally demand the most passive response from people who are the most oppressed. Thus schools in poor and minority areas tend to be the most authoritarian.

Obedience to Authority

One thing kids are taught in U.S. schools is to unquestioningly submit to authority. They are expected to continue being obedient as adults, and we've all seen what that means: general acceptance of government policies (genocide in Southeast Asia, CIA coup in Chile, cutbacks in social services); acquiescence to capitalist decisions (rent hikes, speed-ups, lay-offs); unquestioning obedience to the law; and obedience to the supervisor on the job. This sense of subordination, the acceptance of the "because I said so. . ." attitude, is necessary for corporations, with their hierarchal organization, to run smoothly. The schools teach it in two important ways.

First, the hierarchal structure of society is reproduced in the school, so that students will get used to it. The school board is on top, followed by principals, department heads, and teachers – and students at the bottom. The sexual and racial composition of the top layers subconsciously tells students what type of person is expected to rule in our society: the white heterosexual adult male. An age division is also produced in the school. After being in grade school for a few years, kids learn that being older means being better, and that to associate with those who are younger is demeaning.

Students experience this hierarchal structure mainly through their relationship with the teacher. Everyone sits facing the teacher who does most of the talking, tells everyone what to do, hands out grades, and is always right. A science teacher of mine at Madison Area Technical College once demanded that all assignments be turned in on unruled white paper, with the student's name and the date in the upper right corner. When students asked why he had such a stupid regulation the teacher replied, "Once you're out in industry you're going to have to follow orders without questioning why. So you might as well start learning now how to do it."

But we shouldn't be too hard on teachers. They're low in the hierarchy too, and don't have much more power than we do.

The other way that schools teach students to be blindly obedient is that people in authority are presented as benevolent, and always interested in the welfare of those under them. So why not obey them?

Sociologists say that 75% of all second graders think the president cares about the letters they write to him. Police are portrayed as directing traffic and helping old women cross the street. Yes, authorities are benevolent: if you behave all week, your teacher will even let the class chew gum on Friday.

Competition and Individualism

Under our capitalist economic system, most people have to sell their labor power in order to survive. The only ones who don't are the capitalists, the people who *own* the factories, banks and stores.

It's in their interests to have workers compete for jobs. If the workers ever decided there was a better way to distribute work, and that the problems of labor could be solved on a collective basis rather than on an individual one, then the capitalists would be in trouble: the workers might just find them unnecessary.

The importance of competition is that it keeps workers from getting together. Schools encourage competition in several ways.

For one thing, they are arranged so that for students, as for workers, the success of one person is dependent on someone else's failure. Grading is the biggest culprit here, particularly the "curve" system and class rankings, which say that only so many people can be on top, and so many have to be at the bottom.

In classroom discussions students are pitted against one another. The teacher cuts off the "wrong" answer, and calls on a "brighter" student for the correct one, thus making the success of one student dependent on the mistakes of another.

Sharing is not emphasized, whispering in class is a sin, and most cooperation is called cheating. Students are taught only to ask questions to the teacher, not to each other.

In the first few years of school, students are so indoctrinated with these competitive values that peer pressure soon takes over the role the teacher had previously played. "What d'ja get?" is the most commonly asked question in school, as students try to see whether they are doing better or worse than their classmates.

Competition is inevitable, say the schools. After all, isn't it a duck-eat-duck world?

Cooperation Under Authority

While capitalism forces everybody to compete with one another, jobs are organized in a way that requires people to work together to some degree. As the assembly lines and large offices replaced individual production, capitalists recognized the need for cooperation. They encouraged the schools to set up activities like student councils, school newspapers and others that would teach young people to work together.

The important thing is that this cooperative activity is always under the control of the authorities. Students can cooperate on projects only if teachers say so, student organizations can meet only if they have an "adviser," and newspapers can be distributed only if approved by the administration.

What capitalists don't realize – or maybe they do realize it and don't know what to do about it – is that their need for people to work together contains the seeds of a threat to their power. The way that workers are put together in factories and offices, and the way that students are crammed together in schools, are the basis upon which they will eventually get together and reject the illegimate authority that has been placed over them.

Sexism as Socialization

Sex-stereotyping starts in the family with pink clothes and dolls for the girls, blue clothes and fire engines for the boys. The schools strengthen it.

Studies have shown that teachers reward certain traits in boys – aggressiveness, strength, and self-confidence – and other traits in girls – dependence, shyness, and docility.[10]

A boy is likely to be told "stop acting like a girl" when he cries, and teachers will show more astonishment if a girl does some rambunctious, disobedient act

than if a boy does it.

Girls are to be spectators, not participants. They are portrayed that way in grade school readers, and expected to act that way on high school cheerleading squads. A high school women's status is linked to being able to have a popular boyfriend, and ads in *Junior Scholastic* or on TV tell her she can catch a good one of she will wear the right make-up, get a new wardrobe each spring, and act like a lady.

Grade School Readers reek of sexism. One women's group studied the content of 134 readers and found that boy-centered stories outnumbered girl-centered ones by a five-to-two ratio. Biographies of men outnumbered those of women by six-to-one.[11] A similar study be the National Organization for Women (NOW) found that vocational prospects are also stereotyped, with adult males protrayed in 147 wide-ranging occupations, adult females in only 25. The majority of those 25 jobs were out-of-the-home versions of what is considered to be women's work -- cleaning, dress-making, and cooking. While 40% of working women in this country have children, NOW found only 3 working mothers in these readers.

There are not just stereotypes, but outright attacks on the female sex. NOW's study found 67 examples where one sex demeans the other; 65 of them were against girls. Girls even belittle themselves, with comments like "I'm just a girl, but I know enough not to do that."

Math books, too, contain sex stereotyping in their story problems. Men are astronauts, police, and truck drivers; women are nurses and waitresses, if they have a job at all.

Since most of what goes on in school is in the written word, the sexism that is subtly integrated into our language appears daily. Thus, when someone's sex is not known, they are referred to as "he" and all of humanity is referred to as "man," and "mankind." In this pamphlet I use the new term "co" in place of her/him, and cos in place of hers/his.

The sexual composition of jobs in the school tells kids a lot about their expected roles in life. Eighty-five percent of all elementary school teachers are women, while 78% of the principals are men.

Schools are so effective that soon students begin reinforcing sex roles themselves. Females compete for their boyfriends, and the males harass each other for not being athletic, or for showing emotion.

The women's movement has fought this sexist socialization on many fronts. One partial victory came when Title IX of the Federal Education Amendments was passed in 1972. It was supposed to prevent any school system from receiving federal funds if the district practiced sex discrimination. While this law was progressive, it fell short in many areas due to its vague language and faulty enforcement prodecures. Sexism still reigns in most areas of public schooling.

Gay Youth and Schools

The most blatant sexual socialization in schools is the anti-gay, or anti-homosexual, attitudes that are taught. The stereotype that boys should be tough, and girls feminine, is especially hard on gay young people (including those who have not yet recognized their gayness) who often reject these roles and come to feel different.

Whenever homosexuality is discussed in school, which isn't often, it's seen as a sickness, something abnormal. The role and oppression of gays throughout history is rarely discussed, nor is that fact that homosexuality has existed in all known societies and that Judeo-Christianity played a major role in making it "abnormal." In literature classes the gayness of

authors (like James Baldwin, Gertrude Stein, or Oscar Wilde) either goes unmentioned or is implied as a shortcoming that they surmounted. When teachers do mention homosexuality, their tone of voice makes it clear that this subject is best not discussed openly.

Personal relationships are presumed to be heterosexual. When student handbooks say that "students of opposite sexes are *not to hold hands in* the hall," they aren't saying it's OK for students of the same sex to hold hands – they're saying that such a thing would be unheard of. School proms and family living courses assume that everyone is in a heterosexual relationship now, or hopes to be in one someday.

Male gym teachers, out to "make men," are notorious for their anti-gay attitudes – calling a class a "bunch of fags" is the worst insult they can imagine. For many gay young people, gym class is the most dreaded period of the day.

Gay teachers rarely "come out," i.e. openly admit they are homosexual, for fear of losing their jobs. There has been one significant victory in this area – a Maryland District Court ruled in 1973 that teachers cannot be dismissed for being gay. But as any non-white person can tell you, a few court rulings against discrimination don't change much.

Why do anti-gay attitudes exist? They can't be blamed strictly on capitalism. Such attitudes have existed in many economic systems, and the reasons for their existence are complicated. But one point should be made here about why anti-gay prejudices are important to the capitalist economic system.

The nuclear family (father, mother, and children) plays an important role in our economy. We have already seen how the family (though less today than in previous centuries) socializes children. It is one place where young people learn to live and work in a hierarchy. Upper-class kids learn the traits that will help them be at the top of the hierarchy in later life; working-class kids learn traits that will help them accept their position at the bottom. But everybody learns to accept the idea of a hierarchy, with some people giving orders and others following them.

Gay liberation threatens this neat family structure. As more people recognize and accept their gayness, the influence of the nuclear family will diminish. People will be more likely to live in groups, with everyone sharing in the decision-making, something that would go against the present patterns of socialization.

Socialization and Race

From the "flesh-colored" crayons of kindergarten to the living situations depicted in grade school readers, racism subtly socializes not only third-world and native people, but white kids as well.

History starts with Egypt, then goes to Babylonia, Greece, Rome, and up to Europe where it stays until "Columbus discovers America." Africa and Asia also are not discussed until after whites "discover," exploit, or militarily invade them.

The structure of schools reinforces this racist socialization. Minority teachers constitute a smaller percentage of the teaching force than they do of the general population. In Milwaukee, where black community members have organized around educational issues for over a decade, the situation is a bit improved, but still racist. In the city's 40 black schools there are only 13 black principals, while half the vice-principals in those schools are black. Interestingly, the black vice-

No, these people aren't sitting in a high school class. They're at Honor America Day, a patriotic celebration that was held in Washington, D.C. one Fourth of July. But you can be sure that school is where they learned to sit so docilely and glazey-eyed.

principals play a disciplinary role similar to that of black puppet governments in colonial Africa, when the whites ruled and the blacks were forced to do the dirty work.

The use of only the English language, and the unavailability of bilingual programs for Spanish, Asian and other non-English speaking people not only interferes with their education, but also is blatantly racist and demeaning. Those who know two languages, like English and Spanish, are classified as "culturally deprived," while white Americans who only know one are portrayed as superior.

Acceptance of Boredom and External Rewards

Imagine spending the first 18 years of your life in a free, non-authoritarian environment, and then getting put in a full-time secretarial job. You would hate it. Chances are you'd do a lousy job and would soon quit or get fired.

One purpose of the schools is to prepare people to accept such jobs. After spending 12 years in school, workers aren't so likely to mind a boring job.

Gold Stars

Since workers can't expect much inner satisfaction from their job – as they don't control the process, product or conditions of work under capitalism – they must learn to accept the boredom and work for external rewards. Schools teach them to do that. Instead of wanting to learn because it's fun, or useful, students are taught to learn because it brings the external rewards of gold stars, good grades, and diplomas.

This has become increasingly important as production technology has gotten more complicated. Before the turn of the century, workers in many industires assembled whole products, instead of having a 40-second turn-of-the-screw job like on today's assembly lines. Assembly line work is more alienating than the old methods, and as it became common, bosses looked for better ways to motivate their workers.*

The motivation they chose — aside from the traditional capitalist motivation that if you don't work, you starve — was to use external rewards like wage increases, incentive programs, and the possibility of advancement. Schools began teaching people to work for external rewards, and it made the job of the factory owner easier.

Imagine what would happen if students learned because learning is joyful, or because it would teach them how to provide social services like free housing and health care? A graduating student would go to work on a General Motors assembly line or in the GM offices, expecting to do satisfying work. Instead, the graduate would be met with a dull tasks that had to be repeated over and over, and a product that was expensive, polluting, unsafe, and designed to fall apart in two years. Or maybe the graduate would expect to produce something socially useful and be met instead with an end product of a B-52 bomber, a pop tart, or a sexist advertisement. The system would meet great resistance.

* One way the owners did *not* choose was to manufacture just socially useful products. That is, produce no war materials, or cars that fall apart in two years, but rather good housing, transportation, and free health care. Such a mode of production would have run against the class interests of these owners; they were seeking profit, not the fulfillment of human needs.

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

As explained in the earlier section on this subject, the political *content* of the curriculum reinforces and goes beyond the method by which it is presented. History is presented as the story of ruling elites and famous individuals. Students are told that the wealth of our nation is due to the free enterprise system, not the blood and sweat of millions of working people. And students are told that the problems facing the U.S. are just kinks in capitalism which can be ironed out by our leaders.

This analysis of the present can sound plausible only because of the distorted view we get of the past. Reforms like the 8-hour day and the Wagner Act (which guaranteed labor the right to organize) are seen as products of Congress's social vision, not of class struggle.

If the current struggles for social change were seen as a natural outgrowth of our common revolutionary heritage, more people might become involved. History classes could study local historical events, and talk to workers who had lost their jobs and property because they were black-listed for union organizing. Classes could investigate industrial deaths and accidents in the area. But of course they don't.

Distortion of Oppressed People's History

Third-world People

It is not only the history of working people that has been distorted, but also that of women, minorities and gay people. While the civil rights movement has forced some changes, particularly in textbooks, it's not enough. Few texts, for example, recognize the primary importance of slave labor to the growth of the capitalist economic systems of Western Europe and the United States, and even fewer mention the slave rebellions and revolts in any detail. Acceptable black leaders like Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King are emphasized while more radical ones like W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X and Angela Davis go unmentioned.

The history of the Chicano people is similarly distorted. How many Americans know the U.S. seized part of Mexico through armed force? How many know that farmworkers were first organized by the radical IWW (Industrial

Workers of the World) and then by the Communist Party?

The colonization and oppression of the people of Puerto Rico is ignored, and the Puerto Rican freedom fighters, including those who attacked Congress in 1954, are portrayed as lunatics.

The American Indian is probably the worst treated of any group. The numerous massacres of Native Americans are rarely mentioned, while Custer's Last Stand is glorified.

Women's Struggles

Young people are also indoctrinated with the ideology of sexism in the schools. History books on all levels are sexist. The women's movements are played down, and roles that women have played in all historical periods are seen as unimportant. Do you know much about Mother Jones, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Parsons, Harriet Tubman, or Emma Goldman, and the struggles they represented?

Author Janice Law Trucker, examining 12 of the most popular history texts, concludes:

. . .based on information included in these commonly used high school texts, one might summarize the history and contribution of American women as follows: Women arrived in 1619. They held the Seneca Falls convention in 1848. During the rest of the 19th century, they participated in reform movements, chiefly temperance, and were exploited in factories. In 1920 they were given the vote. They joined the armed forces for the first time in the Second World War, and thereafter have enjoyed the good life in America. . . .[12]

Imperialism

Nowhere is political indoctrination more blatant than on the issue of U.S. foreign policy. Textbooks could not simply ignore the U.S.'s hundreds of bases, hundreds of thousands of overseas troops, and numerous military interventions throughout the world. So they portray U.S. foreign policy today as "making the world safe for democracy."

In a typical textbook, *The Story of Our Country*, we find:

At about the time the U.S. obtained Hawaii, it also became especially interested in Latin America.

. . .The President of the U.S. asked Spain to give Cuba its independence. When Spain refused the U.S. went to war.

The purpose of the war was to make Cuba independent from Spain.

After the Spanish-American War, Cuba became a free and independent nation. . . .

In actuality that war was nothing more than a war between two imperialist powers – the U.S. and Spain – over control of several colonies, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Phillipines. Little mention is ever made that the U.S. had to send 100,000 troops to the Phillipines to put down a native revolt after Spain surrendered.

Some U.S. actions do go unmentioned, like the series of interventions after World War II – Iran in 1953, Guatamala in 1954, Lebanon in 1958, the Congo in 1964 and Chile in 1973.

The "free world," which includes such unfree nations as fascist Brazil (where the Catholic Church has accused the government of torture), apartheid South Africa, Franco's Spain and Park's South Korea (where student demonstrators have been hanged) is treated very uncritically. Rarely do textbooks mention that the term "free world" means "free" for American corporations to invest in.

Students learn that democracy and capitalism are synonymous, and that socialism and democracy are opposites. In reality most capitalist countries don't

even make a facade of democracy. In countries like our own, which do claim to be democratic, workers vote on how to run the factory or office about as often as people under 18 vote for president.

Conservative Bias

It's not surprising that this interpretation of history appears. First, we've already seen how large corporations produce most materials used in the schools. In addition, the people who write the books went through the same school system and watch the same Walter Cronkite as we do.

Teachers themselves, having gone through more schooling than their students, are usually more indoctrinated. The few who do not fit this stereotype don't last long. It's common for radical teachers to get fired for letting students call them by their first names, for being trade union militants, or for teaching "radical" history.

Even current events, which could be so interesting, is simply a sophisticated method of political indoctrination. Where do we get our news? Either on TV, from one of the huge corporations, or from newspapers controlled by the same corporations.* Such news is biased, usually racist, and anti-communist. Take reporting on the war in Indochina. Casualty reports said "Twenty Americans, 507 South Vietnamese, and 200 Communists died in action last week." The allies were always reported on the basis of their nationality whereas the "enemy" on the of ideology. The effect is supposed to be that we equate the idea "enemy" with the word "communist." Why doesn't the newscaster say instead "Today 10 democrats, three republicans, and one independent were killed, and two existentialists are missing"?

Radical speakers are rarely allowed in school, whether it be Belle Case LaFollette (wife of "Fighting Bob") in the 1920s, anti-war activists in the '60s or gay people in the '70s.

* A good book on this subject is *Don't Blame the People: How the News Media Use Bias, Distortion and Censorship to Manipulate the Public*, by Robert Cirino, Vintage Press.

The Books We Use

This section would not be complete without mentioning several indirect ways that textbooks aid in indoctrination. First, their boring styles make history seem lifeless. Second, history is discussed abstractly, as being unrelated to the problems students face today, and so seems irrelevant. Last, history is presented as something permanent, something that once written does not need to be re-examined.

So our history, from the first Egyptian pharaohs to the most recent presidential administration has been fragmented, distorted and rewritten. It's measured on the basis of four-year presidential terms, and is a sequence of unrelated inventions, discoveries, wars and personalities. With our common history of struggle denied us, and with the past rewritten, corporate leaders find the present much easier to manipulate.

When Nixon said, "History will absolve our role in Vietnam" he knew what he was talking about, for it is members of the capitalist class that will write and rewrite our history – at least in the immediate future.

KEEPING ON TRACK

We have seen how the tracking system developed when industry, as it increased the division of labor, required a more diverse workforce. In this section we'll examine how the tracking system functions today and what effects it has on the most recent immigrants to the cities – the blacks.

Tracking refers to many things. In kindergarten the teacher has boys put away the blocks and girls clean the sink; first grade has different levels of

reading groups; junior highs in many cities have 7-A, 7-B levels, and in high school your ACT scores and guidance counselors fit you into "the college or job of *your choice.*" According to the American Civil Liberties Union, tracking exists in over 90% of this country's schools. More and more, people are criticizing its discriminatory effects.

Differences Between Schools

One common form of tracking is in the difference between urban and suburban schools. Suburban schools are newer, better equipped and more prestigious among college admission officers than are urban high schools, especially black ones. Research in Milwaukee has shown that the inner-city black schools have more over-aged pupils, more bachelor-degree teachers, fewer master-degree teachers and more unexperienced teachers than other schools in the district.

What does this mean for the students? In Milwaukee, it means that among the students in the four inner-city high schools only 1% have reading scores above average, 31% at average, and 68% below average. The scores are substantially higher for white schools in Milwaukee, and higher still in the affluent suburbs.

Differences Within Schools

Ability grouping within schools also separates students by race and social class. It starts in first grade where students are grouped by their ability to read. Kids from upper- and middle-class backgrounds end up in higher groups because many of them already have some familiarity with reading.

Furthermore, many minority children speak a different language at home (Spanish, Chinese, etc.) or a different English dialect (Black English) and then are tested in white middle-class English. In the words of a judge who found the tracking system in Washington DC to be unconstitutionally discriminatory:

> *Because these tests are standardized primarily on and are relevant to a white middle-class group of students, they produce inaccurate and misleading test scores when given to lower-class and Negro students. As a result, rather than being classified according to ability to learn, these students are in reality being classified according to their socioeconomic or racial status, or – more precisely – according to environmental and psychological factors which have nothing to do with innate ability.*[13]

Expectations

The problems don't end there. Young people tend to perform according to their teacher's expectations, which are significantly influenced by the ability group the student is in. In a California experiment, 20% of the students in a

Table 1: Median income for all males (25 years old and over) by race and education, 1969

Years of schooling	*Black*	*White*
Less than 8	$3,000	$3,600
8	4,300	5,500
9 to 11	5,200	7,300
12 (high school graduate)	6,100	8,600
1 to 3 years of college	7,100	9,600
4 or more years of college	8,600	12,400

Source: *Current Population Reports*

Table 2: Median income of civilians (25 years and older) with full-time year-round jobs, 1968

Years of schooling	*Male*	*Female*
Less than 8	$5,300	$3,300
8	6,600	3,600
9 to 11	7,300	3,900
12 (high school graduate)	8,300	4,800
1 to 3 years of college	9,300	5,500
4 years of college	11,800	6,700
5 or more years of college	12,800	8,300

school were chosen randomly but the teachers were told that they were an above-average group. Those students gained twice as many IQ points as did other students – a self-fulfilling prophecy.[14]

Because teachers expect less from low-track students, they are taught less and learn to expect less from themselves. The gap keeps widening. First grade black children have a median verbal test score of 45.4 (the national average is 50). By the twelfth grade, it is down to 40.9. It would be even lower if the many black students who never make it through 12th grade were considered too. Other minority students are affected in much the same way.[15]

Once out of school the barriers are still there. Unemployment is twice as high for minorities as for whites. Even blacks who make it through college earn less on the average than whites who have only a high school diploma. (See table 1.)

Sex Roles

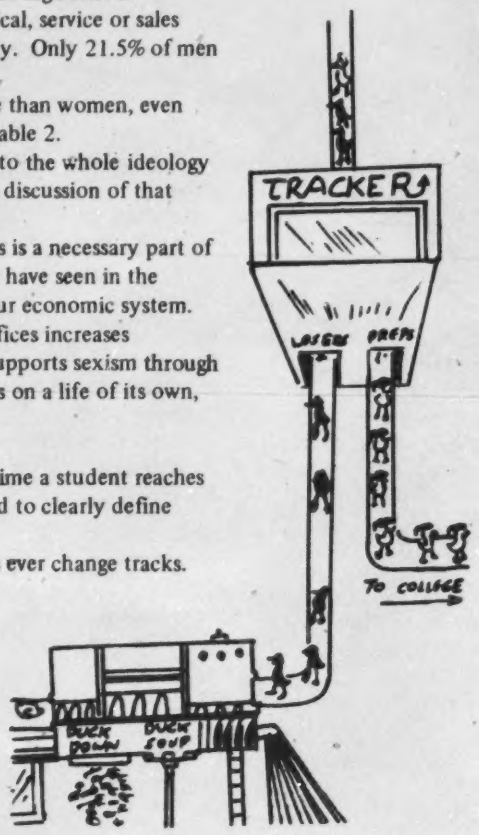
Tracking by sex is another part of the school system. We've already seen the sex-role socialization that takes place in elementary schools. By 3rd grade the first sex-segregated class usually appears: gym. Girls are taught dancing and good posture while boys learn to play football and to do a hundred sit-ups without complaining. In high school there is a gross discrepancy between the financial support given to male versus female sports.

The occupational tracking women face is equally blatant. Nationally, half of the young women in public vocational-education programs are being trained in home economics and one-third in office practices. The result is shown by the Bureau of Labor Statistics which studied the occupations of high school graduates in 1970. It found that 71% of women held clerical, service or sales jobs, which are among the lowest-paying jobs in our society. Only 21.5% of men graduates held jobs in these areas.

This job discrimination means that men earn a lot more than women, even though their education may be comparable, as shown in Table 2.

The reason schools track women into these jobs is tied to the whole ideology of sexism in our society. There is no room for a thorough discussion of that here, but two points should be made.

First, the *unpaid* labor of tens of millions of housewives is a necessary part of the family and economic structure. And the family, as we have seen in the section on anti-gay socialization, is an important part of our economic system. Second, the *underpaid* labor of women in factories and offices increases corporate profits. Thus motivated, the capitalist system supports sexism through the schools, media and hiring practices. That sexism takes on a life of its own, and penetrates all aspects of society.



Everybody is affected by the tracking system. By the time a student reaches junior high or high school several influences have combined to clearly define what occupations are open to co in the future.

Researchers have estimated that only 7% of all students ever change tracks.

Table 3: College attendance in 1967 among high school graduates

Family Income	*Percent who did not attend college*
under $3,000	80.2
$3,000 to $3,999	67.7
$4,000 to $5,999	63.7
$6,000 to $7,499	58.9
$7,500 to $9,999	49.0
$10,000 to $14,999	38.7
$15,000 and over	13.3

Table 4: Probability that a male who has reached grade 11 will enter college

Ability Quartiles	*Socioeconomic Quartiles*			
	Low 1	2	3	*High* 4
Low 1	.06	.12	.18	.26
2	.13	.15	.29	.36
3	.25	.34	.45	.65
High 4	.48	.70	.73	.87

The socioeconomic index is based on family income and parents' occupations and incomes. The ability scale is based on tests measuring "general academic aptitude."

Whatever track a student is in – drop-out, job-right-after-school, housewife, clerical, vocational, or college-bound – they stay there.

Recently, some schools have de-emphasized tracking. That doesn't mean it has disappeared. Tracking is usually de-emphasized only in high schools, by which time students have internalized "track" expectations, or in school systems where whole schools are separate tracks – poor kids to this school, rich kids to that school.

Tracking continues in college. In the first place it determines who goes to college. Kids from upper-class families are much more likely to attend college than those from poor families, as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Since government expenditures per-pupil become greater in higher grade levels (they're twice as high for college students as for those in first through twelfth grade), those who stay in school longer get much greater government subsidies. Everett Reimer conservatively estimates that children of the richest tenth of the population receive ten times the public funds for education that children of the poorest tenth get.

As more and more people attend college or university, a tracking system is developing within higher education. Elite eastern schools and state universities are at the top. State colleges are next, while community and technical (2-year) schools are at the bottom. The system is maintained through differences in tuition, entrance requirements, test scores, and of course, guidance counselors and the student's previous track.[16]

"Stay in School"

There is one last myth about tracking that must be dealt with. Everyone has heard the Army's propaganda, "If you want a good job, stay in school." On the surface these advertisements appear to be true, but they aren't. Just carry the above statement to its extreme: what would happen if everyone did stay in school? Say everyone stayed in school through college. Would our economy stop having a need for garbage collectors, farmworkers, assembly line workers, and the 5-20% unemployed? Of course not. The validity of the advertisements depends on most people not following their advice. Although there are cases of individual mobility, for the majority of people there is none.

SCHOOLING AND THE ABSORPTION OF "SURPLUS LABOR"

One little-recognized function of the school system is to *absorb* (occupy) *surplus labor power* (people who would otherwise be unemployed). This has become increasingly important in the last few decades. With industry becoming

more and more productive, and corporations building factories abroad to exploit cheap foreign labor, the level of unemployment constantly threatens to rise. The school system and the armed forces have kept it under control.

Schools absorb surplus labor in two ways. First, they occupy millions of students, who otherwise would be looking for jobs. Second, they create a market for teachers, buildings, etc., which in turn employs more people. According to one study, the expansion of the schools and military from 1950 to 1965 resulted in 8.7 million more young people being in those institutions in 1965 than would have been there otherwise. If that surplus had not been absorbed the present unemployment rate would be near the level of the Great Depression.[17]

Labor Market Safety Valve

The schools are flexible in fulfilling this function. In fact, some capitalists in *Fortune* business magazine (January, 1974) have argued that there aren't enough workers for certain menial jobs. One proposed that this problem "could be offset by a reduction in school hours, particularly in high-school years. A growing growing number of educators and sociologists favor more part-time exposure of teenagers to the working world. . . . (and the work that they would do) would be work generally considered menial."

This has already happened in some isolated instances. In the fall of 1973 many school districts in Wisconsin released students to work in vegetable canning plants. The teachers union blasted this action, saying that the 100,000 unemployed people in the state should be hired first, but many schools went along with it anyway.

Whether more emphasis in the future will be put on keeping students in schools to absorb the surplus, or on releasing them for part of the day to do menial tasks, is not yet clear. What is clear is that the wishes of capitalists, not of students, will mainly determine what happens.

Paper Chase

Historically, this goal of keeping down the size of the labor market was one of the earliest rationales for compulsory education. Working people, particularly, saw this as important because underpaid young people were filling the jobs that adults needed. Today people are coerced into staying in school through the use of diplomas and degrees, which are required for many jobs. In order to be a garbage collector in New York City you must have a high school diploma!

As more working-class kids go to school for longer periods of time, the number of degrees required for the better jobs also increases. This is done so the children of the rich – who apparently can afford to go to school indefinitely – can always be one step above the poor on the job market, and thus preserve their class privileges.

SCHOOLING AS A SOURCE OF DIRECT PROFITS

We have already seen how the large corporations benefit from the school system by the way it socializes, tracks, trains and politically indoctrinates young members of society. The corporations also benefit directly from the vast market for goods that the schools provide.

Upton Sinclair wrote that in the late 1910s and early 1920s, many textbook companies contributed to certain State Superintendents' campaign funds so their textbooks would be used. Today construction companies and real estate firms also take an interest in school board elections.

Since the mid-1950s, when large corporations started looking with more interest at education as a market, the education-industrial complex has grown. The Council of Economic Advisors notes that education spending has been

increasing at the rate of 10½% per year for the last decade while the total economic growth has been less than 4%. The Council calls education "one of the major U.S. growth industries."

Government subsidies to education are also increasing; from 1966 to 1969 federal money available for educational hardware went up *700%*. It's enough to make a corporate mouth water with anticipation.

Advertisements in school administration journals show that many large corporations have found it profitable to form "educational divisions." Some have monopoly control over certain fields – Polaroid in photo-identification cards and CIBA (a pharmaceutical corporation) in behavior modification drugs such as Ritalin. As their profits increase, the corporations are going to pay even more attention to what is happening in education. Anyone interested in having democratic schools will find their fight harder because of this.

WHO PAYS FOR THE SCHOOLS?

Public schools are financed primarily through local property taxes. State taxes help some, and the federal government provides the least, only 8% of total costs.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 tried to provide a way for schools to be financed. It gave local governments in the Northwest Territories one sixteenth of every township, which they could rent or sell to get money for the school. Too often this land was squandered instead. In Wisconsin, the land set aside could have brought in 50 million dollars. But that didn't happen. Officials were bribed to sell it for less, and only one-seventh of the potential income was received.[18]

That money didn't last long, so in Wisconsin, as in states where no such land reserve had existed, another means of finance was needed. State legislatures authorized property taxes, which by 1858 financed 7/8ths of Wisconsin's public education.

The trouble with property taxes is that they are "regressive." That is, they charge the same tax on property of equal value, even if one of the property owners earns five times as much as the other. It is usually small homeowners and renters (through increased rent) who pay the brunt of such taxes.

Property taxes cause another inequity when they are used to finance the schools: the resources to be taxed vary greatly from state to state and from suburb to inner city. A few states have taken steps to lessen this discrepancy, but in others there is still as much as $500 difference between the amount spent per pupil in rich districts compared to that spent in poorer ones.

THE FAILURE OF REFORMS AND INNOVATION

Believe it or not, the schools have historically been seen as one of the most progressive institutions in our society. It is commonly believed that education helped the immigrants improve themselves economically in the early part of the century, and that it can help poor and oppressed people to move up the social ladder today.

It is true that immigrants of the early 1900s advanced economically to some degree. However, that had less to do with their education than with the expanding capitalist economy which needed more middle-level workers. The day labor jobs that the white immigrants left did not disappear – they were filled by the blacks moving up from the South.

Poor and minority people today have more education than the immigrants

did, and yet are unable to move up the social ladder. Gabriel Kolko, in *Wealth and Power in America*, estimates that, for all practical purposes, personal incomes today are as unequal as they were in 1910.*

Yet progressive educators and reformers still tell us that education can equalize the distribution of wealth and power in our society. They introduce one innovation after another which is supposed to make education more effective. Yet just like a half-century ago, the only reforms likely to be accepted are those which somehow benefit the capitalist system. All other proposed reforms go unimplemented and reformers, who refuse to study the relationship between the economic system and the way the schools are run, can't figure out why.

* For further information see "The Extent of Income Inequality in the United States" by Ackerman, Wezler and Zimbalist, in *The Capitalist System*, pages 207-218.

Catchy New Reforms

One reform that *is* catching on is the use of technological "learning" devices, pushed by companies like IBM, RCA, Time-Life, Xerox, ATT, ITT and Singer. These devices usually consist of film strips, tapes, workbooks, maybe even computers utilized by students in isolated learning cartels. Corporations like these innovations because they're profitable, administrators like them because they lower teacher costs, and many students like them because they're more fun than listening to a dull lecture from a teacher.

Yet these methods of teaching are worse than that of even the most backward teacher. Students learn that the tape knows absolute truth. Critical thought is essentially prohibited, dialogue is impossible, and if students get curious about a certain point they can't go off on a tangent because the course sequence is pre-determined.

Rising Star

Another widespread innovation is the use of behavior modification drugs. Today Ritalin is being used on over 2 million students. Drugs like this make things run more smoothly by pacifying students – but so did the mind control drugs in Huxley's *Brave New World.*

Then there is "programmed learning instruction," also known as behavior modification. Instead of the negative reinforcement of detention, or talks with the dean, schools are using "positive reinforcement" to keep young people in line. In a recent experiment at a junior high school in Maryland, students were given points for "appropriate dealings with teachers" and good test scores. These points could be cashed in for free time away from class, soft drinks and candy, or permission to bowl at school.

Similarly, 3rd graders at an elementary school in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, get play money if they do their assignments on time. The money can be used at biweekly toy auctions.

While such conditioning worked for B.F. Skinner on dogs and rats, to refer to it as "learning" is ridiculous. This behavior modification bullshit should be thrown out the window along with its proponents.

Reforms like "the open classroom" and certain types of individualized instruction have the progressive aspect of realizing that all 30 people in a class aren't identical. But they still don't change the basic content, authority relations, or tracking system of the schools

The reform which seems most likely to succeed is career education. It usually involves a type of work-study program which places youth in low-paying, menial, non-union jobs that employers would otherwise have trouble filling. Despite its name, this is really just an extension of the tracking system.

New methods of teaching – but the material is still the same old quack.

'Mindlessness' or Bad Ideas?

The major thing reformers have tried in their wish to equalize things has been to inject large amounts of money into schools. This is usually called *compensatory education*. Most educators agree that it has failed; now they are only arguing why it failed. Some, such as Christopher Jencks of Harvard, are coming to see that the only solution to the educational crisis is socialism.

Most educational reformers, however, don't show such insight. One widely read book on the subject is *Crisis in the Classroom*, written by Charles Silberman (an editor of *Fortune* magazine) and financed by the Carnegie Foundation. Silberman concluded that it was "mindlessness" that got the schools into the situation they are in now. But mindlessness didn't create the schools any more than mindlessness caused ITT to intervene and overthrow the democratic government of Chile. What's mindless is any educational "expert" who can't see past their own nose to the real cause of the crisis in our educational system.

Liberal Goals

Sam Bowles, the educational historian mentioned earlier, summed up the situation when he said that there have traditionally been three liberal goals for the schools: 1) to prepare people for their adult roles; 2) to equalize society, socially and economically; and 3) to help the creative development of people. Those are nice goals, he said. The only trouble is that under capitalism the first one contradicts the last two.

THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

The 1960s and early 1970s saw mass movements developing in different sectors of our society around social issues. Here I want to briefly examine the strengths and weaknesses of some of the movements closest to the educational system.

Community Control Movement

Inspired by the civil rights movement of the 1950s, the large black population in northern cities began demanding more control over their schools in the '60s. This led to federal legislation in the mid-'60s providing funds for compensatory education – Head Start, Upward Bound, and the Teacher's Corps. These programs failed to deal with the real problems, failed to accomplish their stated goals, and failed to pacify black people. The movement continued, with demands for minority history courses, more minority teachers and, most important, community control of the schools.

The community control movement is important because it involves oppressed minorities fighting against a capitalist institution. There are severe limitations to its potential, however. Even if people control a ghetto school, they still don't control the school board, the textbook corporations, or the job market.

Nevertheless, the struggle is important. Getting some control will make people more self-confident and determined to win power not only over one school, but over the whole system

Student Rights and Anti-war Movement

The high school student movement grew with the anti-war movement. Students tried to pass out leaflets in the halls, and print articles in the school paper denouncing the war. When they weren't allowed to do so, students began to realize that they were denied their constitutional rights. Furthermore, they saw that this denial and the rigid nature of the school made schools a training ground for future soldiers and a future "silent majority." Students everywhere had sit-ins, demonstrations, and strikes.

This mass movement forced administrators and courts in some areas to grant students certain basic rights: freedom of press and an end to dress codes were the most common.

However, the high school movement of the '60s had some weaknesses. First, many students did not begin organizing until a year or two before they graduated. That meant student underground papers and organizations rarely lasted more than a school year. Second, as U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War decreased, and as certain reforms were won, interest in the movement dwindled. Last, students generally had anti-teacher and anti-parent attitudes. This is understandable, but in the long run such attitudes prevented alliances between groups that really had the same interests.

The student movement continues today, though on a smaller scale. There are sit-ins, underground papers and student unions, as students continue to demand their rights and try to defend those won in the past.

Alternative School Movement

The alternative (or free) school movement stemmed from many of the same dissatisfactions as the student rights movement did. Free schools flourished in the late '60s and showed how education could be humane and relevant.

The movement had several weaknesses, however. First, it never expanded much out of its middle-class base. Furthermore, it became isolated from the high school movement and from other social movements. In fact, activists and potential activists were drawn out of the high school movement. Many alternative school organizers, who began with hopes of challenging the public schools, got too wrapped up in the day-to-day survival of their schools to do anything else.

Most important, however, their strategy for change was fundamentally incorrect. Free school organizers failed to realize the central role that schools play in the capitalist system, and thus thought schools could be changed simply by presenting alternatives. Isolated from most students and teachers, caught up in the "educational process," they didn't see the importance of organizing within the school system to build a mass movement of students, teachers, and parents.

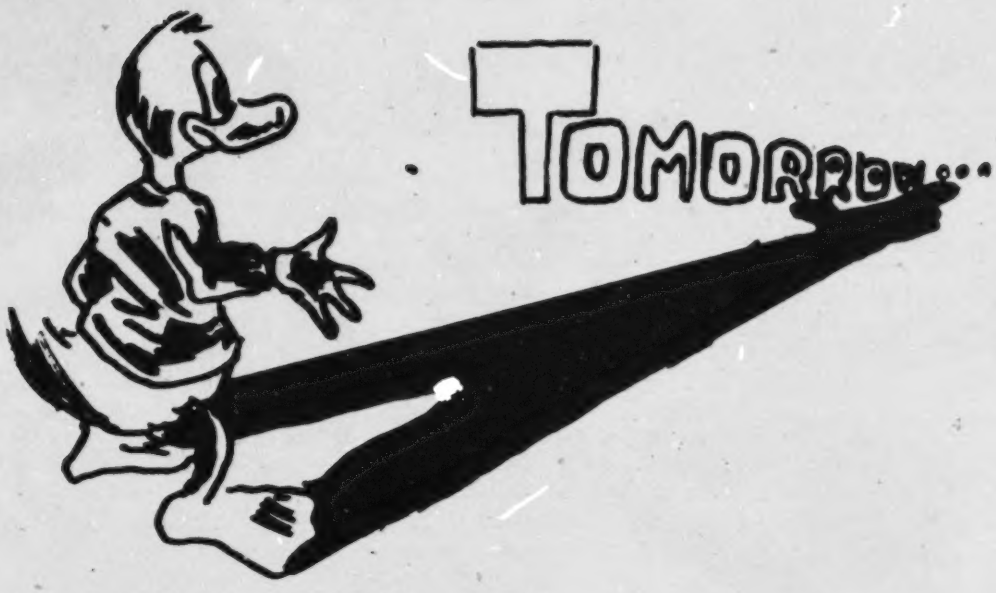
Teacher Union Movement

As the labor market for teachers got tighter in the early 1970s, and working conditions failed to meet their professional expectations, many teachers began to realize that the only way to protect themselves and to improve education was through strong teachers unions. It is important that teachers are recognizing they are workers, but it's also important that they not be too narrow in their outlook.

Teachers have to realize that they are not meatcutters. The "products" they are working with are human beings who should have full rights. Teachers must include in their contracts a demand for student rights and student participation in running the schools. Teachers don't have to wait for a strike to do something; they can begin by running classes democratically, and helping students build mass organizations.

As a Quebec teachers union put it, teachers must recognize that while the role of police in society is to protect private property, the role of teachers is to protect and pass on the ideology of private property. Teachers must critically examine this role if they are to work with students and community people to take control of the schools away from the rich.

Below: A student power protest? No, a pep rally. Learning school spirit now encourages company loyalty later.



THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

The only real solution to the problems outlined in this pamphlet is a socialist revolution in the United States. Control of industry, offices, schools – all institutions in our society – must be taken from the ruling class so that the people who produce the wealth, who work in these institutions, and who are affected by them, make the decisions about how to run them.

No one can say just what a socialist America would or could be like. I certainly couldn't pretend to describe its potential in a few paragraphs. But I would like to make a start, to broadly discuss what socialism might mean for our society as a whole, and for the school system in particular.

First, most of the things we have heard and read about socialist countries are distortions and anti-socialist prejudices. Furthermore, some countries that started socialist, like Russia, have regressed back into a type of state capitalism, where the working class no longer runs the government. However, I believe such countries as China, Vietnam, and Cuba are presently making large strides toward creating truly socialist countries.

In a socialist America people would democratically run the factories, the offices, the government, and all other institutions. Human needs would be put before private profit. Quality food would be produced instead of pop tarts and sugar cereal; job safety and a humane work environment would come ahead of technological innovations and higher productivity; free medical care, decent housing, and cheap mass transportation would be put before the respective profit industries; and humane, non-exploitative TV and radio programming could replace profit-backed advertising and cops-and-robbers shows. Furthermore there would be a basis upon which to eliminate sexism and racism, as there would no longer be a capitalist economy demanding exploitation of women and minorities. With that out of the way, we could fight past prejudices and everyone could achieve new levels of equality and human fulfillment, free from prejudice about race, sex, and sexual preferences.

"Utopian!" some will charge. But it's not. If you take the issues which I have mentioned above, analyze them, and find their real causes, you can see how they could be abolished if human needs were put before private profit. That is what

we have done in this pamphlet with the educational system we have seen that its history and present condition have been determined to a great extent by the needs and ideology of the capitalist economic system. The same would be true if we analyzed housing, mass transit, alienation at work, or the Vietnam War: we would see that each has been shaped by the needs of the profit-oriented economic system. And each could be changed dramatically if we were to create a socialist society.

The Chinese Example

The accomplishments that China has made since its socialist revolution 25 years ago give some indication of what is possible. In the spring of 1973 people from Wisconsin Youth for Democratic Education and the Wisconsin Alliance went to China and visited factories, schools and communes. They went there filled with skepticism, which they had gotten from school and the media. What they found was not a perfect society, but one making immense gains.

A hundred years ago, China was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country where at least 20% of the people were addicted to opium, where women had their feet bound and were treated like dogs, and where millions died in famines. Today China has been transformed by the people. They have eliminated venereal disease, drug addiction, and disease-infested flies. It is still a poor country, but industry is developing, no one goes hungry, prices are stable and sometimes go down, and no one is unemployed.

While old ideas still linger, the Chinese are committed to the liberation of women. Women have equal legal rights in all areas, equal job opportunity, 54-day paid maternity leave, and day care centers at most major workplaces. While there is still not perfect equality in areas like government representation and sharing of housework, improvements are being made.

People are encouraged not to perform only manual or mental labor. White collar workers regularly participate in factory or farm work, and blue collar workers regularly study together. Most important, though, the workers run the factories and offices, while teachers, students and parents run the schools.

Each school in China is administered by a revolutionary committee, composed of students, teachers and party members. Students combine classroom study with productive labor. "Busywork" is unheard of. Student criticism of teachers was publicized and encouraged in a recent nation-wide campaign. Obviously, radical changes in education, and other areas of society, are possible.

The American Potential

Lets get back to the potential of a socialist America, and what education could be like in such a society. First, schools would be democratically controlled by students, teachers and community members. Because students would democratically run the factories and offices upon graduation, they would learn how to run things by helping to run their schools. Examinations would no longer be used as a tool to rank or divide people. If used at all, they would only be for helping students measure their own capabilities and progress.

People would learn how to criticize without belittling each other, to help others overcome their weaknesses and build upon their strengths. This would be necessary because in a society run for the good of its members it is paramount that everyone cooperate.

There would not be such a big distinction between school and community, between study and work. Students could work and learn in the community more, and after graduating could continue their contact with the school and education.

All the negative attitudes and habits built up by our capitalist society would linger for years after a revolution. One function of school would be to begin breaking down those traits as quickly as possible. The schools would no longer have to meet the requirements of a profit system and could stress unity, respect for different cultures, equality of women and gay people, cooperation, and social consciousness. For the first time, young people could learn the real history of our country.

People would no longer be tracked according to their race, sex, or class background. Since there would be no fear of unemployment under socialism people would go to school to learn, not just to get a certificate. If there wasn't enough work to do in society, the people could rationally plan how to cut back everyone's hours so people would have even more time to follow their individual interests.

People would be participants more and spectators less. There could still be friendly competition for the purpose of self-improvement, but the idea of a few people participating in violent spectator sports while masses of others passively watched would be replaced by people developing their own bodies.

Potential of Education

While the educational systems in the existing socialist countries are not ideal, they can give us an idea of the potential of ours. The strength of a socialist system can be shown by how rapidly Cuba taught its people to read. When the revolutionary government took power in 1959, 23.6% of the population could not read or write. In 1961 the Cuban government mobilized the country to eradicate illiteracy, under the slogan "If you know, teach, if you don't know, learn." By the end of 1961 the illiteracy rate had fallen to 3.9%.[19]

In China, too, education has been extended to all parts of the society. Everyone goes to high school. There is not room in the universities for everyone but the decision about who will go is not based on how much money people have – instead, workers and peasants decide among themselves who should go, on the basis of how well people work and get along with others.

I encourage people to read about education and other aspects of life in these societies. While doing so remember two things: First, our vision of what could be has been limited and warped by our socialization. Second, while the potential of a socialist America can be better understood by examining Cuba or China, those countries are limited, in a way that the U.S. would not be, by their low level of production.

So this is our vision. As we learn more about socialist countries today, and as our struggle grows, our idea of what socialism can mean to the millions of people in America will also grow. Now let us look at how we can fight for that society, particularly as we work in the schools.

STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

As capitalism developed in Europe and in this country, so did a socialist working-class movement, and as capitalism spread around the world people in Asia, Latin America and Africa found that only through socialism could they rid themselves of foreign domination and exploitation. In this country, our struggle for socialism has been long, and so far unsuccessful, but it is clear that increasing numbers of people in the United States are not only getting fed up with the deteriorating conditions in this country, but eventually will see socialism as the only answer to their problem.

Protest and struggle are necessary for change. Unfortunately those struggles are sometimes violent.

As we struggle to change our schools, and our society, we should keep a few things in mind.

We should remember that just as the school principal doesn't give up power without a fight, neither will the capitalist class of this country willingly give up its wealth and power. There will have to be a long struggle, and it will probably be violent at times.

We should also remember the need for unity. Within the working class this means breaking down barriers of sex, race and occupational differences. Within the schools it means teachers, students and community people trying to unite around important issues.

As socialists, we must work diligently for all progressive reforms, not only as a way to improve the schools, but also to educate people about the real nature of the system. We should particularly fight for reforms that challenge some of the fundamental functions of schooling: the abolition of the tracking system; women's, Third World and working-class history; students', teachers' and parents' rights and power; and a breakdown of the hierarchal authority relationships in school.

But we must never get so wound up in reform struggles that we lose sight of our long-term goal of socialism. We must constantly work to create mass support for socialism.

We must also recognize the importance of leadership and organization. While people may spontaneously rebel, only through constant organization will we be successful. This means building radical organizations of young people, parents, teachers, youth liberation groups, socialist teachers' (and other workers') caucuses, and also organizations like the Wisconsin Alliance which unite all these sectors. If your first encounter in trying to organize is with an obscure "socialist" sectarian group don't despair; keep looking and help build groups that you think will be effective.

Finally, we must be optimistic. The struggle for socialism will be a hard one, but not an impossible one. The people of Vietnam were capable of defeating the same enemy we are fighting, and they fought against unimaginable odds. So too in our society, which is so alienated, so filled with mistrust and prejudice, victory is possible. Our struggle is a source of strength and life, of cooperation and love.

APPENDIX

Throughout this pamphlet I have used terms such as *capitalist class, ruling class, middle class, working class* and *working people*. The class nature of our society is not often mentioned in school, so I would like to briefly discuss these terms here.

During the late 1800s manufacturing, and to a much lesser extent agriculture, became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few large corporations, owned by a few people.

Education did not change this. In 1922, when less than a fifth of the school-aged population was graduating from high school, 1% of the population owned 60% of all corporate stock. By 1953, when three-quarters of the school-aged population was graduating from high school, 1% of the adult population owned 76% of the stock. Today it is estimated that that figure has risen to 82%.

The ruling 1 percent also owns 100% of all state and local bonds and 31.8% of all U.S. government bonds

This distribution of income is not changing much, either, as shown by table 5.

In this pamphlet the terms *capitalist* or *ruling class* generally refer to these elite, not more than a couple million in number.

By some definitions, which carry an element of truth, that ruling class is even smaller. The business magazine *Fortune* declared that "the hard financial core of capitalism in the free world is composed of not more than sixty firms, partnerships, and corporations owned or controlled by some 1,000 men."

When we say the capitalist class is the ruling class and controls the country, we recognize that there are differences within even that class – which are worked out in Congress and elections – and contradictions between local capitalists and national capitalists. We also

Table 5: Distribution of before-tax family income since World War II

	1969	*1964*	*1960*	*1956*	*1950*	*1947*
Poorest fifth of the population	5.6%	5.2%	4.9%	5.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Second fifth	12.3	12.0	12.0	12.4	12.0	11.8
Middle fifth	17.7	17.7	17.6	17.8	17.4	17.0
Fourth fifth	23.4	24.0	23.6	23.7	23.5	23.1
Richest fifth	41.0	41.1	42.2	41.2	42.6	43.0
Richest 5%	14.7	15.7	16.8	16.3	17.0	17.2

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau*

recognize that to rule doesn't always mean to directly control. The ideology of capitalism permeates all of society, and often makes direct control unnecessary.

Furthermore, we should not get the impression that individual capitalists created the whole system and have total control over it. The system has laws and operates unto itself. If an individual capitalist turned "socialist" and tried to pay higher wages, competition would force the firm to go under and another would step into its place.

I have used the terms *working class* and *working people* also. They refer to all those who are forced to sell their labor power in order to live. That is, they do not own stocks, banks, or factories that allow them to live off someone else's labor. The working class therefore includes not just blue-collar workers but also teachers, office workers, hospital workers, and service workers, plus unemployed people, welfare recipients, and the dependents of these workers.

There is also an intermediary class made up of managers, small store owners, doctors, lawyers, and some farmers. These people generally own some property but they still have to work to be successful. Those like managers and corporate lawyers, who are directly employed by the large corporations, generally identify with the interests of those corporations. The others, like small farmers and shop owners, sometimes support the ruling class and sometimes oppose it.

These managers, professionals and shop owners, along with small industrialists and landlords, often make up local ruling elites in a community. Their self-interests and ideas are so wound up in the economic structure that they usually tend to support capitalism.

Another term I have used is *relations of production.* It refers to the relationship between those who work and those who own the factories, offices and other institutions. In our society this relationship is a hierarchal one: everyone (except those at the very top, the ruling elite) takes orders from someone who is above them, and there are many different levels of control. This same hierarchal pattern can be found in other parts of our society – like the schools.

The term *nuclear family* means the family structure of father, mother and children, without a lot of relatives. Generally the father is the main authority figure and the main source of financial support. The *extended family,* on the other hand, consists of grandparents, parents and children all living together, sometimes with a few aunts and uncles thrown in. In most parts of the country it has been replaced by the nuclear family.

Notes

1. For extensive discussion of these different types of schools see Michael Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy and Schools* (Praeger, 1971).

2. Quoted in Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Harvard U. Press, 1968) p. 88.

3. A.E. Winship, Jukes-Edwards (Harrisburg, Penn., 1900), p. 13, quoted in David Cohen and Marvin Lazerson's "Education and the Corporate Order" in *Socialist Revolution*, no. 8.

4. Katz, ibid, pp. 39 and 85 and Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy and Schools* pp. 25-28.

5. The Newt Davidson Collective, *Crisis at CUNY* (City University of New York), 1974, p. 34. (Available for $1.25 from P.O. Box 1034, Manhattanville Station, New York, N.Y. 10027.)

6. Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Beacon Press, 1972) p. 115.

7. Thomas Cooper, *Elements of Political Economy*, 1828, quoted in Samuel Bowles, "Unequal Education and the Social Division of Labor" in *Schooling in a Corporate Society*, edited by Martin Carnoy (McKay Co, 1972) p. 41.

8. Alive and Truckin' Theatre Co, *Stage Left, 3 Plays from the First Year*, pp. 74-76, 1973, (Available from 3316 10th Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55407, $2.)

9. The Newt Davidson Collective, op. cit. pp. 37-38.

10. For a summation of different studies see Betty Levy in "Sex-Role Stereotyping of Girls: A Feminist Review of Literature" in *Demystifying School*, edited by Miriam Wasserman (Praeger, 1974) pp. 115-137.

11. For further information see *Dick and Jane as Victims: Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers.* (Available for $1.50 from Women on Words and Images, P.O. Box 2163, Princeton, NJ 08540.

12. Janice Law Trucker, "Women in U.S. History Textbooks," *Social Education*, March, 1971.

13. *Hobson v. Hansen*, 269 F. Supp. 401 (D.D.C. 1967), quoted in Alan Levine, *The Rights of Students* (Avon Books, 1973) p. 104.

14. Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (New York, 1968).

15. Paul Lauter and Florence Howe, "How the School System is Rigged for Failure" in *New York Review of Books*, 18 June 1970, p. 14.

16. This is explained more fully, with sources, in Samuel Bowles, "Contradictions in Higher Education in the United States, 1971, excerpts reprinted in *The Capitalist System*, edited by Edwards, Reich and Weisskopt (Prentice Hall, 1972), pp. 491-503.

17. John and Margaret Rowntree, *The Political Economy of Youth*, printed in International Socialist Journal, Feb. 1968.

18. Conrad Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison Dept. of Public Instruction, 1924) p. 109-116.

19. Stephanie Coontz, "The Failure of American Education," in July-August 1974 issue of *International Socialist Review*, p. 36. For a thorough discussion of Education in Cuba see Bowles, "Cuban Education and the Revolutionary Ideology" in Carnoy, op. cit.

Bibliography

There is much that I would have liked to say in this pamphlet, but had to skip because of space limitations. I particularly wanted to spend more time on a general analysis of our capitalist society, and also on the history of the education of minority people. Instead, I will have to refer readers to the books listed below.

The books about education can be useful if you get into arguments about points that I've made here and need substantiation. In addition, I'd recommend using them in study groups.

Radical Interpretations of the History of Education in the U.S.

Schooling in a Corporate Society, edited by Martin Carnoy, David McKay Co, 1972, $3.95 in paperback (textbook). An academic collection of essays on the class bias of the school system. The two best are by Sam Bowles, one on the rise of education in the U.S., the other on education in revolutionary Cuba. Some essays are a bit difficult or irrelevant for the average reader, but the book is worth getting for the good ones.

Class, Bureaucracy and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America, by Michael Katz, Praeger Books, 1971, $2.25 in paperback. Katz traces the development of the school system in New England. He shows how it was shaped by the rulers of society and how bureaucracy helped perpetuate a racist, sexist system that socialized the poor. While his class analysis is at times too subtle, Katz provides clear, detailed analysis of how the schools were forged.

Education as Cultural Imperialism, by Martin Carnoy, David McKay Co., 1974, $3.95 in paperback. Excellent Marxist analysis of education. Half deals with how the U.S. has used education to dominate people overseas, half on education in the U.S. Carnoy summarizes much of Katz's and Bowles's work in a style that is readable, though at times academic. Unfortunately his conclusions are not openly revolutionary and suffer from the problem all academicians have of being separated from the people's movement.

The Great School Legend, by Colin Greer, Viking Press, 1972, $2.25 in paperback. The legend is that the schools were a vehicle by which

the poor, mainly immigrants, rose to the middle class. It's a lie, says Greer, and he tells why.

Schooling in Capitalist America, by Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, to be published in 1975 by Basic Books. Judging from their past work the style will be academic, even tedious, but the content will be a powerful Marxist analysis.

Parameters of Institutional Change: Chicano Experiences in Education, available from the Southwest Network, 1020 B. St. Suite 8, Hayward, CA 94541. An excellent collection of essays on Chicano education, dealing with both the history of the schools and attempts to reform them. Also includes a good bibliography on "Education Under Capitalism."

Schools Today

Demystifying School, edited by Miriam Wasserman, Praeger Books, 1974, $3.95 in paperback. An extensive collection of essays, some better than others, on subjects like sexism, racism, tracking, curriculum, and strategy for change. Wasserman, who's been involved in the school struggle for years, also includes a good bibliography.

How Old Will You Be in 1984? edited by Diane Divoky, Avon Books, 1969, $1.25 in paperback. A collection of articles from high school underground papers, covering all sorts of issues. Great for students who are just discovering that something's wrong with school, because it shows that many other students have the same thoughts. Another similar book is *Our Time is Now,* edited by John Birmingham.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, by Paulo Freire, Herder and Herder, 1970, $2.95 in paperback. Freire was kicked out of fascist Brazil because of his effectiveness as a teacher while working with the peasantry. Stressing dialogue, Freire outlines a methodology of teaching which is liberating, though at times abstract. Excellent for teachers, particularly.

The Rights of Students, by Alan Levine and the American Civil Liberties Union, Avon Books, 1973, .95 in paperback. The most complete and understandable book on public school students rights. A necessity for high school organizers. The ACLU also publishes a companion book, *The Rights of Teachers.*

How Children Fail, by John Holt, Delta, 1964, 95¢ in paperback. The classic work on the need for more humane schools and a new learning process.

The Organizer's Manual, by the Organizing Collective, Bantam Books, 1971, $1.25. Shows its age in a few spots, and not explicitly socialist, but by far the best all-round organizers manual for work in the schools or community. Worth your money.

Escape from Childhood, by John Holt, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1974, $7.95 in hardback. A good description of the oppression of young people, but no analysis as to its roots. It shows more insight than Richard Farson's similar book *Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children;* but Farson's book is somewhat lighter reading.

The U.S. History That Gets Left Out

Underhanded History of the USA, by Nick Thorkelson and Jim O'Brien, New England Free Press, 1973, $1.00 in paperback. A regular-size comic book, with a teacher mouthing the textbook version of U.S. History and a horse telling what really happened. Perfect for initiating discussion and getting kids interested in history. The NEFP address is available later in this bibliography, if you want to order this book.

Labor's Untold Story, by Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais, published by the United

Electrical Workers, 1955, $3.95 in paperback. Story of the battles, betrayals and victories of American working people. Well-written, exciting reading. Unfortunately it downplays the role of radicals in these struggles.

We The People, by Leo Huberman, Monthly Review, 1932, $3.95 in paperback. Written originally as an alternative high school textbook. It says little about Native Americans but otherwise, despite its age, it is a good, very readable history of working people in America.

Radicalism in America: Great Rebels and the Causes for Which they Fought from 1620 to the Present, by Sidney Lens, Crowell Co., 1966, $2.45. An interesting, readable summary of the struggles left out of our history books. A good replacement for a high school text.

Eugene V. Debs, The Making of an American Radical, by Ray Ginger, Collier, 1949, $1.50 in paperback. The best biography of one of the greatest of American revolutionaries. It reads like an adventure story, and proves that history is not only worthwhile, but enjoyable.

U.S. Capitalism and Imperialism Today

Why Do We Spend So Much Money? by Popular Economics Press, 1975, $1.00. (Available by mail from PEP, 5a Putnam St., Somerville, Mass. 02143.) An enjoyable, well-illustrated pamphlet showing why people suffer and capitalists prosper under capitalism. Excellent for a high school economics class or American history class.

The Enemy, by Felix Greene, Vintage Books, 1970, $1.95 in paperback. A readable summary of many aspects of imperialism including its history, case studies of oppressed countries, and some thoughts on problems with the coming American revolution.

The Capitalist System, edited by Edwards, Reich and Weisskopf, Prentice-Hall, 1972, $7.45 in paperback. This 550 page anthology was written as a college text, and in many cases reads like one, but it is an excellent way to begin understanding our economic system as a whole. Very well arranged and documented.

Socialism as a Theory

An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory, by Ernest Mandel, Pathfinder Press, 1969, $1.25, 78pp. A concise explanation of the basic Marxist terms and laws of economics. A little difficult for one who has never been exposed to Marxism, but better than most.

The Communist Manifesto, by Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, 1848. Published by various companies. Available from China Books and Periodicals – see organizations. The classic statement concerning the ills of capitalism and the need for socialism and communism.

Introduction to Socialism, by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, Monthly Review Press, $1.95. Another good introduction to Marxist ideas. Read this along with Mandel (above) and the ideas are easier to understand.

Women's Liberation

Daughters in High School: An Anthology of the Work, by Frieda Singer, $3.80. (Available from Daughters, Inc., Plainfield, Vt. 05661 – no street address necessary.) A collection of articles and poems by high school women about their liberation.

Woman's Estate, by Juliet Mitchell, Vintage Books, 1973, $1.95. Theoretical Marxist book about oppression of women in modern capitalist society and what she thinks are the tasks of the women's movement.

Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the U.S., by Eleanor Flexner, Atheneum, $3.95. Covers just what the title says it will and does so well.

Little Miss Muffet Fights Back, by Feminists on Children's Media, 1975, $1. (Available from Feminist Book Mart, 162-11 9th Ave., Whitestone, NY 11357.) A bibliography of non-sexist books about girls and women for young readers – includes 180 titles.

Racism and Minorities

Akwesasne Notes, Mowhawk Nation, via Rooseveltown, NY 13683. Send $1 for a sample copy. An information-packed newspaper on Native Americans. They also distribute an extensive range of books, posters, and other materials on Indians.

Autobiography of Malcom X, by Malcom X and Alex Haley, Grove Press, $1.50, and *Autobiography of Angela Davis*, by Angela Davis, Random House, 1974, $8.95. Both books are moving accounts of the personal and political development of black revolutionaries.

Black Women in White America, by Gerda Lerner, Vintage, $3.95. The best available collection on the history of black women in America. from the time of the KKK up through the civil rights struggles of the sixties.

Puerto Rico: A Socio-Historical Interpretation, by Manuel Maldonado Denis, Vintage, $2.45. A good Marxist interpretation of the history of Puerto Rico.

Gay Liberation

The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935), by John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, Times Change Press, 1975, $2.25. One of the few histories of the homosexuality and gay rights movements. Particularly interesting are the sections on the movement and left, considering the reactionary positions on this question held by many socialist organizations.

Lesbian-Woman, by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, Bantam, $1.50. A good introductory history of lesbianism.

Revolutions of the Past and Present

The Russian Revolution, by Marcel Liebman, Vintage, 1970, $2.45. According to Isaac Deutscher, "A coherent, vivid and exciting narrative." Sure to dispel the distortions of your history class, although not uncritical.

Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village, by William Hinton, Vintage, $2.95. The revolutionary process in China, the role of the Communist Party, and other subjects are covered in this long but easy to read classic.

Media, Clearinghouses, Distributors

The Guardian, 33 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011. The best independent weekly newspaper available. Although a bit dogmatic at times, it provides news on most topics (gay and youth struggles excepted) including struggles of women, teachers, and anti-imperialism. A good way to keep informed. Watch out though – your parents might not like getting it in "their" mailbox.

Monthly Review Press, 62 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011. Publishes a wide variety of books, plus an excellent monthly journal. Write for a free book list.

Parthenon Records, P.O. Box 889, Brooklyn, New York 11202. Send for their free listing of progressive records. Try *I Hate the Capitalist System* or *The Force of Life.*

Workforce/Vocations for Social Change, 5951 Canning St., Oakland, CA 94609. A bi-monthly magazine with job listings in

alternative institutions and other good stuff.

New England Free Press, 60 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143. A distributor of inexpensive radical pamphlets and reprints on most every topic. Send for free literature list.

China Books and Periodicals, 2929 24th St., San Fransisco, CA 94110. Distributor of all available literature from China, plus most other radical books available in this country. Send for their free catalog.

United Front Press, Box 40099, San Fransisco, CA 94140. A distributor of radical books and pamphlets. The pamphlets they write themselves are particularly good, and oriented toward a mass audience. Send for a free catalog.

People's Bicentennial Commission, Washington, D.C. 20036. An attempt by radicals to expose the profit orientation of the regular Bicentennial Commission, and rediscover our past. Send for information. A subscription to their newspaper is $2.50.

Wisconsin Alliance, P.O. Box 3273 (1925 Winnebago Ave.) Madison, Wisc. 53704. (608) 251-2821, or 820 Locust St., Milw., Wisc. 53212 (414) 562-3300. Created in 1968, the Wisconsin Alliance is a state-wide mass socialist organization involved in work-place struggles, community organizing, electoral work, high school student and teacher organizing, and in the struggles of small farmers and co-ops. Chapters exist in both large and small cities in Wisconsin. The Alliance publishes a monthly newspaper, *The Wisconsin Patriot,* which is available for a free three-month trial subscription, or for $3 per year.

The February 1st Movement, c/o African World Resource Center, P.O. Box 2413, Washington, D.C. 20013. In December, 1974 a group of students formed a national anti-imperialist black student organization. The name February First Movement stems from the first Woolworth's sit-in, in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM YOUTH LIBERATION

All the materials listed here are available from Youth Liberation, 2007 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. Checks should be made payable to Youth Liberation.

FPS: a magazine of young people's liberation – a monthly magazine combining news and analysis of youth struggles with practical articles about organizing. Each issue includes CHIPS pages, with articles reprinted from high school underground papers; a legal column; reviews; and several feature articles. This pamphlet was originally published as a special issue of *FPS*. Subscriptions are $10 for one year or $18 for two years. There is a special youth rate of just $6 per year for people under 18 years old.

Student and Youth Organizing – a 92-page pamphlet discussing issues you can organize around, actions to take, and skills you'll need. 65¢.

Young People and the Law – 32 pages. If you believe your principal you may believe you have no rights – just "privileges." This pamphlet proves otherwise. It contains excerpts from five important court cases (four of them from the U.S. Supreme Court) defining just what your rights are with respect to free speech, due process, etc. The famous *Tinker* decision is one of those covered. 50¢.

How to Start a High School Underground Paper – 16 pages of just what the title promises. 35¢.

Teaching and Rebellion at Union Springs – the radicalization of a teacher and her students in a sleepy town. 26 pages; 35¢.

White House Conference on Youth – 42 pages. Contains the text of some of the resolutions passed by young people at the president's 1971 conference. 50¢.

Schoolstopper's Textbook – 87 ways to fight back against your school. A best-seller for over three years. 22 pages; 25¢ each or 10 for $1.

Selected Reprints – about 10 articles from old issues of *FPS*. 50¢.

Youth Liberation: News, Politics and Survival Information – Written by Youth Liberation, published by Times Change Press. 64 pages; $1.75.

Buttons – one says "Youth Liberation" with a symbol, the other says "Power to Young People." Both are in 3 colors with safety backs. Indicate preference; 25¢ each.

Sample packet – of 12 high school underground papers from around the U.S. Fun to read, particularly helpful if you want to start your own paper. $1.50

Mini-posters – set of 3 different ones, each 8½" by 11" in three colors on heavy stock. Each poster is about student rights or youth liberation. Two sets (6 posters) for 50¢ or five sets for $1.

Stickers – a sheet of about a dozen stickers with different youth liberation messages; you cut them apart, lick them, then stick 'em on your principal's desk when no one is looking. You can mix these with our mini-posters (above) when ordering: any combination of 6 for 50¢ for 15 for $1.

T-shirts – Silk-screened to resemble the "School Zone – Watch Out for Children" road signs. But instead of two little darlings looking both ways there's a silhouette of a young person aiming a rifle. Indicate size: Small, Medium, Large or X-Large. $2.50.

How to Research the Power Structure of Your Secondary School – 112 pages of what the title says. $1.

Live It: Communalism – about collective living and working styles. Published by Vocations for Social Change. 64 pages, 60¢.

NOTE: These prices are guides. If you are young or on a limited income, send what you can. If you can send more, we hope you will.

UNFAIR TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Something is fundamentally wrong with the American public schools. Students have their rights trampled, innovative teachers get frustrated and are often fired, and reforms either never come or are so distorted that the reformers don't even recognize them.

In *Unfair to Young People: How the Public Schools Got the Way They Are*, Bob Peterson steps back into history to uncover the origins of our present-day problems. His findings are illuminating. Mass public education emerged at about the same time as the giant corporations did – and it wasn't by coincidence. The corporations encouraged and molded the schools, as much as they could, to meet their own needs. Guidance counseling, the tracking system, junior high schools, and even recess were invented or manipulated to serve the corporations, which needed a disciplined, obedient labor force. Today the corporations, aided by principals and school boards, are still at it.

Peterson looks at the different ways schools schools treat and mistreat kids today. He shows how the sexism and racism, the competition for grades, the emphasis on obedience and the denial of constititional rights all serve corporate needs. Many educational reform movements of the past failed because the reformers didn't realize that the schools cannot be made truly humane unless the whole society is also changed.
The information in this book should help future organizers and reformers to channel their energy in an effective direction.